

BIBLE CHARACTERS



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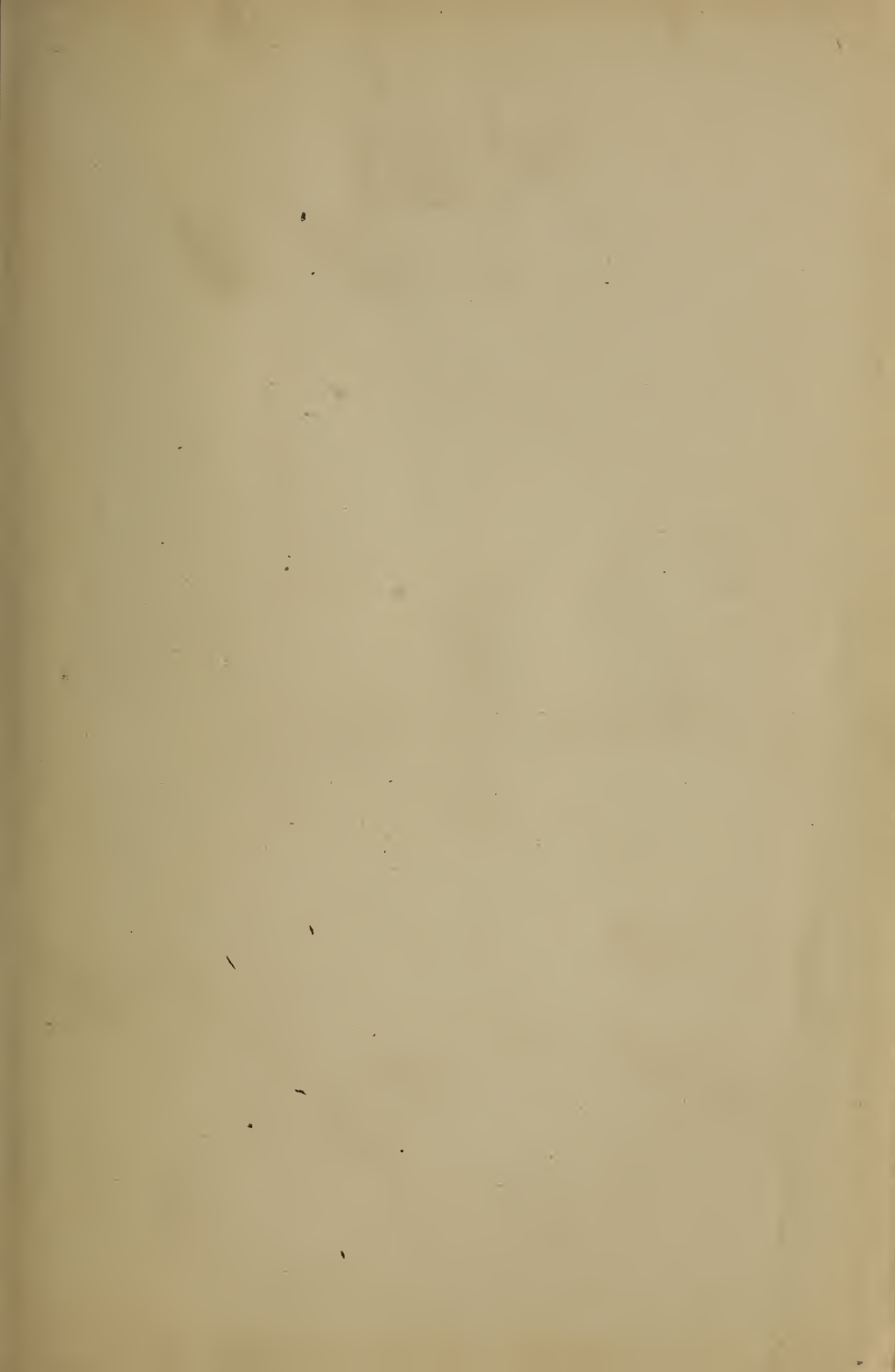
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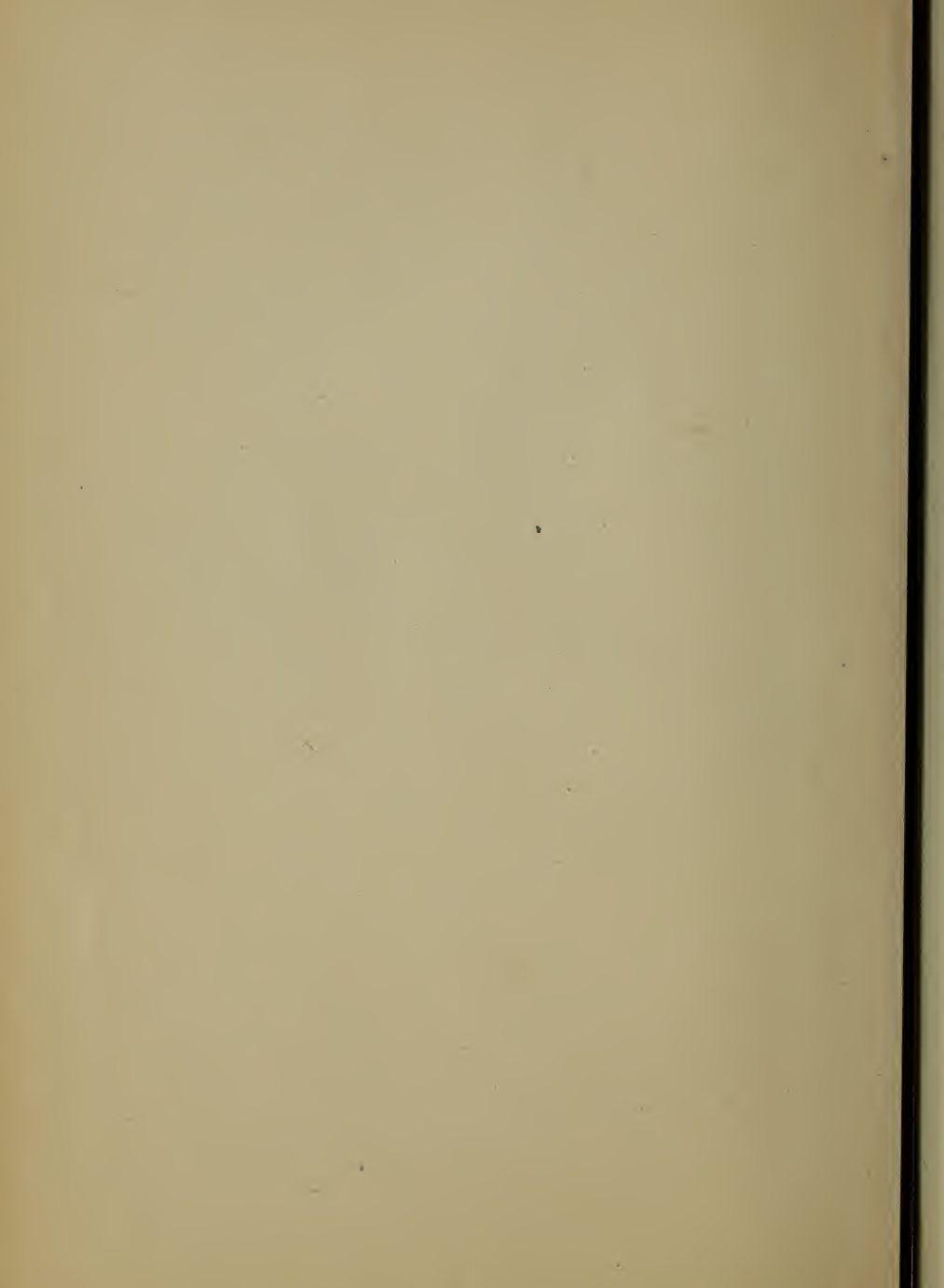
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Ruth and Naomi.

Bible Characters

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BY

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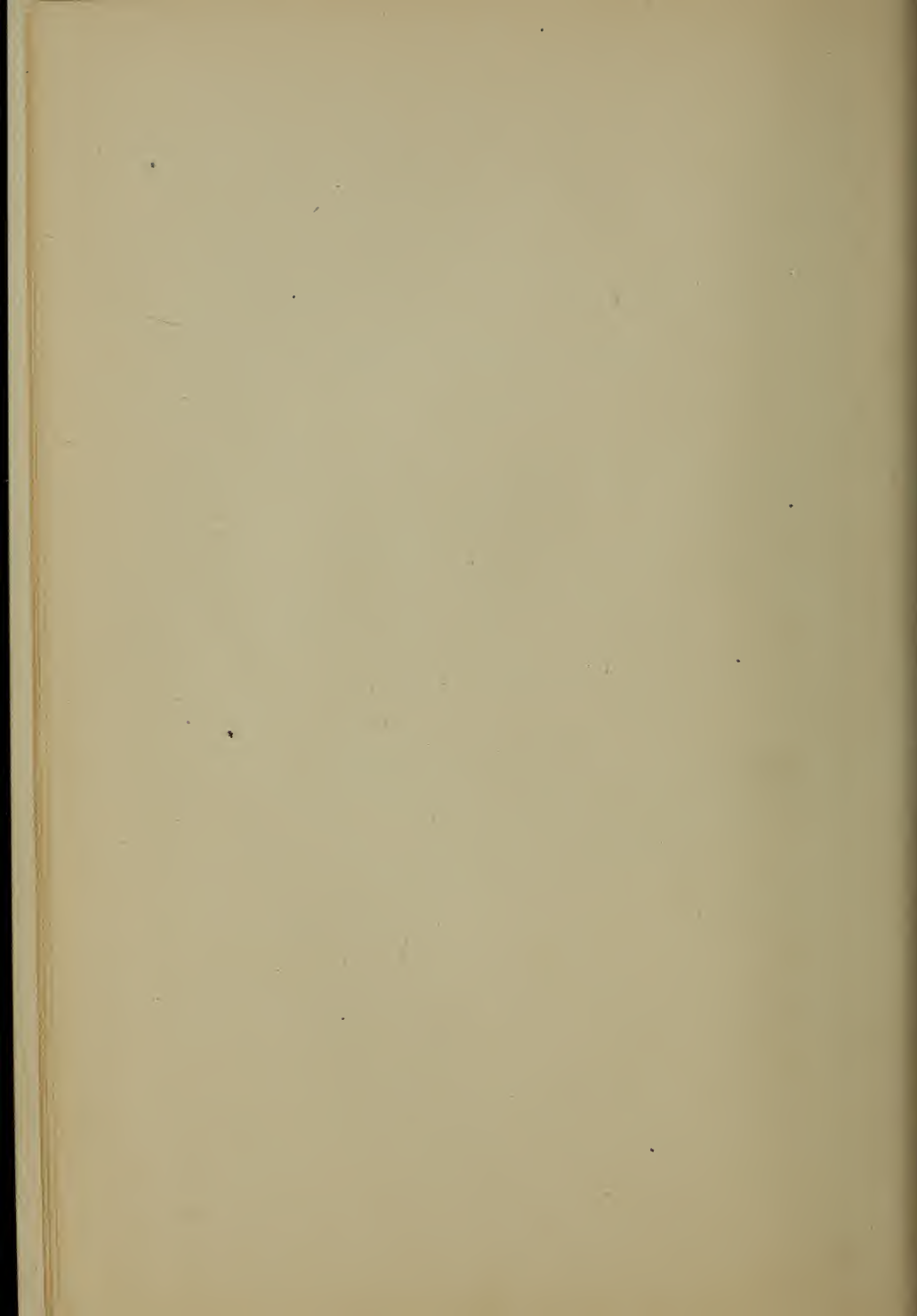


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INTRODUCTION.

THE Sacred Scriptures are so comprehensive that they may justly be termed a "Library of Historical Information," especially in the department of biography, which is history, especially that of distinguished persons. They teach the "Brotherhood of Nations," and the unity of the human race in the fundamental qualities of humanity. Only a very brief record of the lives of a large part of Bible characters is given in the Scriptures, though their works and writings may have been abundant and comprehensive.

In describing the career of different persons living at the same period, and actors in the same scenes, repetitions are sometimes unavoidable, while a description of the places where remarkable events occurred is presumed to render still more interesting both place and event.

A more extended space has been given "The Eloquent Orator" than to any other character, for the reason that more is written about his labors than is given of others.

The Scriptures have been the chief source of information, and have been, in some instances,

almost literally reproduced in the following "Sketches," the main object being to arrange and classify the events in chronological order, and designate the position each prominent individual held.

Bible Characters.

A Romance.

CHAPTER I.

AN INTERESTING STORY.

FROM the earliest ages of the world to the present day, famines or the scarcity of provisions necessary for man and animals, have visited different countries, causing great distress, and sometimes the death of a large number of the inhabitants of those regions visited by such calamities. War, famine, and pestilence are the fearful methods often employed by the Supreme Ruler, to chastise nations and teach them the lesson that transgressions of His laws bring inevitable punishments, though the innocent suffer with the guilty in all national adversities, but in the future life, perfect justice will be administered to all.

Those nations or communities that have never suffered from such a calamity as a famine, cannot,

of course, fully understand its horrors, but the imagination can picture scenes of intense suffering and dismay. Famines have, sometimes, been the means of effecting important national movements, as was the case in the history of the Israelites. At the close of the rule of the Judges of Israel, there occurred a famine in Palestine, that constituted the foundation for the interesting story of Ruth the Moabitess.

There lived in the town of Bethlehem, an Israelite of the tribe of Judah, named Elimelech with his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. This man was the owner of land, since each tribe and family had portions assigned them on the division of the conquered territory. While residing at Bethlehem, the country was visited by a famine, which caused great suffering. After their supply of provisions was exhausted, the people were greatly troubled, not knowing where to obtain food necessary to sustain life. Their flocks and herds were dying from hunger, and the people must soon perish, unless they could obtain provisions. The fruit trees had withered, therefore nothing could be expected from them. Little children were crying for bread, and mothers were holding their helpless infants while suffering from weakness themselves. The whole region visited by the famine afforded some of the most pathetic scenes ever witnessed.

At length the news came that the Moabites, their neighbors, had plenty of food, since the famine did not reach their land, therefore Elim-elech resolved to leave his own home with his family, and go to their country. Accordingly, they made preparations for their journey and a residence in a foreign land during the famine, still keeping possession of their house and land, expecting to return.

They probably took with them such articles as they could carry, and the means of supplying their immediate wants. It is not certain how they travelled, but as the distance was not great, it was likely they journeyed on foot, and as Mahlon and Chilion were approaching manhood, they could be of great assistance to their parents.

When they came into the country of Moab, almost the first object that attracted their notice, was the lofty peak of Mount Nebo, a memorable place to an Israelite, since it formed the mausoleum of their great lawgiver, who was buried by the angels of God. The scene as imagined, is beautifully described by Mrs. C. F. Alexander, in a poem on the Burial of Moses, beginning,

“By Nebo’s lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan’s wave
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave :

And no man dug that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er
For the 'Sons of God' upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there," etc.

The Moabites were the descendants of Moab, son of Lot, consequently were the kindred of the Israelites. The same was true of Ammonites; both nations settled east of the Jordan, the Ammonites north of the Moabites, whose capital city, situated on the river Arnon was known by several names; as 1st Ar-Rabbah, 2d Rabbath-Moab, —3rd Arnon-Rabbah. The earlier inhabitants were giants called Emin, whom the Moabites conquered. The Israelites during their exodus, were forbidden to attempt the conquest of the Moabites, but there were frequent wars between the two nations for a long time. The Moabites would not allow the emigrants to pass through their territory, on their journey to Canaan, neither would they supply them with food though payment was offered for it. Both the Moabites and the Ammonites their kindred, were idolaters, and sometimes offered their children as a burnt-sacrifice to their gods, whose worship was attended by gross immoralities.

The prophecies concerning Moab are numerous and remarkable, and have been fulfilled. It was predicted that the nation would fall from its high estate on account of its wickedness. The

country contained numerous populous cities, of which more than fifty have been located by explorers, from their ruins, comprising the remains of temples and other buildings, constructed of stones of great size, and with columns measuring three feet in diameter, cisterns cut out of the rocks, hanging gardens and other remarkable works, affording proof that the Moabites had made great progress in some departments of the arts of an advanced civilization. The desolation of this ancient country must have surpassed human conception. One prediction of the prophet is as follows: "O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth."

Elimelech and Naomi, though living in an age when their country was ruled by judges, some of whom adopted the heathen practices of cotemporary nations, yet it is presumed they maintained their national religion taught them by Moses the distinguished lawgiver of their nation, therefore when emigrating to a pagan land, they did not forget their early training. It is probable that others of their countrymen removed to Moab, which was rich and fertile, on account of the famine in Palestine, and may have formed a society by themselves with priests to instruct them; and perhaps some were inclined to accept

the religion of the Moabites. It appears that the sons of Elimelech associated with them since both married Moabite wives, a practice not sanctioned by the laws of the Israelites, which forbade such alliances with heathen nations.

During a residence of ten years in Moab, important changes occurred in the family of Elimelech and Naomi. Mahlon married Ruth, and Chilion selected Orpah for his companion, both daughters of Moabites. Elimelech and both his sons died, leaving Naomi and her daughters-in-law without a protector.

At length the report came that the famine had ceased in her native land, and that the harvests were abundant, therefore Naomi resolved to return to her own country accompanied by her daughters-in-law whom she regarded with tender affection and sympathy, and who were ardently attached to her, as proved by their willingness to leave their kindred and native land and go with her to a foreign country. The three women started for Bethlehem in the land of Judah, but before proceeding far on their journey, Naomi told her companions it would be better for them to return to their home and friends, and leave her to go on alone, and giving them a parting kiss, she burst into tears and said, "The Lord deal kindly with you as ye have with me and the dead."

They wept and replied: "Surely we will go with thee unto thy people," but Naomi urged them to return, when they expressed their grief in loud lamentations. Orpah, after kissing her mother-in-law, returned to her people and her gods, as it is expressed by the sacred historian, but Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave thee, for where you go, I will go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God. Where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do unto me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Naomi did not argue the question any longer, but yielded to the resolution of Ruth, and the two went on their journey until they came to Bethlehem.

When they arrived at the city, the inhabitants were much surprised and inquired, "Is this Naomi?" She replied, "call me not Naomi," (meaning pleasant) "but Marah," (bitter), "for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty."

It was at the beginning of the barley harvest when they arrived at Bethlehem. This harvest occurred about the middle of April, and after the barley was gathered, the wheat and some other grains were ready for the reapers, including the master, his children, menservants and maidservants, beside hired laborers. While engaged in

their tasks, they expressed their joy for the harvest, by singing songs. The grain, after being reaped, was gathered into bundles to be removed from the fields, but that which grew in the corners of the field, was left for the poor, and if a bundle was accidentally dropped by the reapers, it was left for the same reason.

There lived in Bethlehem a kinsman of Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, a wealthy and honorable man, named Boaz—(meaning strength, firmness) and the owner of extensive fields of grain. He employed a large number of reapers over whom was placed one of the servants to watch and direct the others.

Naomi, not having ample means for her support, Ruth said to her, "Let me go to the fields and glean ears of corn," (that is barley), "after any reapers who will be favorable to me." Her mother-in-law replied, "Go, my daughter," showing the relation between them was tender. Ruth accordingly went to a field that belonged to Boaz, though she did not know who the owner was. She asked permission to glean and received a favorable answer, when she continued her labors from morning until evening, except at short intervals for meals.

When Boaz, on a certain day, came from the city of Bethlehem, to look after his reapers, he saluted them as was his custom, saying, "The

Lord be with thee," to which they replied, "The Lord bless thee." Seeing Ruth gleaning in the fields, he inquired who the damsel was, and received the answer that she was the Moabitess who came with Naomi. Boaz was pleased with the young woman and addressing her as, "my daughter," said, "do not go to any other field, but remain near my maidens, and when you are thirsty drink of the water my young men have drawn, and I have given them orders not to interfere or offer you any insult." When Ruth heard these words of kindness she bowed low and said, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, seeing I am a stranger?" and of a different nation, she might have added.

Boaz, it appears, had learned something of Ruth's history. He said, "It has been explained to me about your attachment to your mother-in-law, and of your leaving your father, mother, and native land, and coming to live with a people who are strangers to you. The Lord God of Israel reward thee." Ruth replied, "Let me find favor in thy sight, for thou hast comforted me by thy kind words," etc. Boaz told her to come and take her meals with his reapers, when he gave her parched corn, that is barley or wheat. After she had gone to resume her gleanings, the master gave orders to his reapers, to allow her to glean among the sheaves, and to scatter some of

the grain for her to gather. She gleaned until evening and beat out the grain comprising about an ephah, which she carried to the city and gave to her mother-in-law who inquired, "Where hast thou gleaned to-day? Blessed be he that did care for thee." Ruth told her the man's name was Boaz. "He is near kindred to us," replied Naomi. "He wished me to glean in his field until the end of the harvest," said Ruth. Her mother-in-law approved of this plan which was followed.

The epha or ephah referred to in this narrative, was a measure equal to about one and four-ninths of an English bushel, and was used for both dry and liquid substances. For the dry it contained three pecks and three pints; for liquids, it was equal to seven gallons and four pints.

Naomi arranged a plan for her daughter-in-law's future career as follows. She said, "Boaz winnows barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Now take a bath with a fragrant ointment, then dress in a neat attire and go to the threshing-floor, but do not make yourself known. After the master has feasted and lain down to rest, notice the place, then go and uncover his feet and lie down, when he will tell you what to do." Ruth said she would follow her directions.

When Boaz had feasted and "his heart was merry," as it is expressed, he lay down at the

end of a heap of grain. Ruth came softly, uncovered his feet and lay down. This was not perceived by Boaz who had, doubtless, become stupefied from the effect of wine, but about midnight, after he had recovered his senses, he discovered to his fear and amazement, a woman reposing at his feet. He demanded, "Who art thou?" She replied, "I am Ruth, thy kindred. Spread thy skirt over me, for thou art a near kinsman." He said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter, for thou hast shown more kindness even than thou didst in the beginning, inasmuch as thou didst not follow young men whether poor or rich. Now, my daughter, fear not. I will do all thou requirest, for every one knows thou art a virtuous woman. It is true, I am thy kinsman, still there is another who is a nearer kindred than I am. To-morrow the question will be settled, which one shall perform the duty of a kinsman. Lie down until morning."

Ruth obeyed and waited until early in the morning before any one could be clearly seen, for Boaz did not wish it to be known that a woman came into the floor. He said to Ruth, "Bring the vail thou hast and hold it," when he gave her six measures of barley. Boaz then returned to the city, and Ruth came to her mother-in-law and related the adventures of the night. Naomi said, "Wait until it is known how the matter

will end, for the man will not rest until it is settled."

Early in the morning Boaz went to the gate of the city and sat down to wait for the kinsman referred to, whose name is not mentioned. He, however, soon appeared, to whom Boaz said, "Ho; stop and sit down, for I have a message for you." He obeyed the summons and sat down to hear the news. Ten elders of the city had been invited to be present as witnesses at the conference which was to settle the question. Boaz then addressed this kinsman of Naomi, saying, "That she had returned from the country of Moab and had sold a piece of land that had belonged to our brother Elimelech. I wish to say, in the presence of these witnesses, buy the land if thou wilt, but if thou wilt not redeem it, tell me, and I will do so, but if you buy the real estate of Naomi, you must accept in marriage Ruth the Moabitess, the young widow of Mahlon, the son of Elimelech." The kinsman said, "I cannot redeem the land lest I injure my own inheritance," and then, as was the custom in Israel in those days, he took off his shoe or sandal, and gave it to his neighbor, and said to Boaz that he was at liberty to purchase the estate, when the latter addressed the people assembled at the gate, saying, "Ye are witnesses that I have purchased of Naomi this day all that belonged to Elimelech

and his sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and I have also purchased Ruth, the widow of Mahlon, for my wife, that the name of the dead may be perpetuated, as ye are witnesses this day." The people said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make this woman like Rachel and Leah among the Israelites, and may you be famous in Bethlehem, and may your posterity, the descendants of Judah, be prospered."

Boaz, who, it is presumed, had no family at this time, married Ruth the Moabitess, who became the mother of Obed, the father of Jesse, whose son was David, king of Israel. When the child was born, Naomi's countrywomen congratulated her, saying, "Blessed be the Lord who has not left thee without a kinsman whose name may become famous in Israel. He will be unto thee a comforter in thine old age. Thy daughter-in-law is better than seven sons." Naomi took the babe in her arms, and became its nurse.

The exact period when the events of this interesting story occurred is not positively known, but it has been estimated at about 1250 B. C. Some writers have expressed the opinion that the descent of the Messiah from a Gentile through the line of David, is an intimation of the comprehensive nature of the Christian dispensation.

From Captivity to a Throne.

CHAPTER II.

AN ANCIENT PEOPLE.

PERSIA, called by the natives Iran, the original home of the Aryan race, is a country that has survived great political changes and desolating wars for more than 2,500 years, and still exists as one of the leading nations of Asia. Modern Persia extends 900 miles from east to west, and 700 from north to south, and has an area of about 648,000 square miles. It consists largely of an elevated table-land covered, in some places, with mountains, and abounds with salt lakes, many of which have no visible outlets. The chief of these is Lake Urumiah, in the northern region. The heat in autumn is excessive, but in summer the climate is more tolerable, while in winter and spring it is delightful. The native settlers consist chiefly of the Tajihs, descendants of the ancient Persians, with an intermixture of foreign blood. The nomads or pastoral tribes comprise four dis-

inct races, while a small number, perhaps 25,000, are Christian and 15,000 are Jews. The entire population numbers between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000. Silk is the staple production of the country, and the government is a pure depotism, while the sovereign, styled Shah, exercises absolute authority over the lives and affairs of his subjects; and the dominant religion is that of Mahomet.

Elementary education is very generally diffused among all classes, and there are a large number of colleges where students are instructed in the Mohammedan religion, and in Persian and Arabic literature. Both the ancient and modern languages of Persia belong to the great class of Indo-Germanic. The literary life of the Persians began in the ninth century, A. D., and continued to flourish for five centuries. During this period, there were numerous writers in various departments of learning, including poets, the most distinguished of whom was Hafiz, styled the "Sugar-Lip"; but after him, Persian poetry began to decline. The historians form an important class, while there are only a few writers on science. Theological works are mainly translations from the Koran.

The architecture of this ancient country is of considerable interest, on account of its resemblance to the Assyrian and Egyptian, the earliest architecture of which we have any positive

knowledge. The buildings of ancient Persia were constructed of material similar to that used by the Assyrians. The ruins of the splendid palaces of Cyrus and Cambyzes at Pasargardæ still exist, and Persepolis, the capital of Darius and Xerxes (560-523 B. C.), Susa, Ecbatana, and Teheran contain ancient ruins.

The halls of the buildings at Persepolis were square with an equal number of pillars on every side for the support of the roof which was flat. In the centre was an opening to admit light, sheltered by another roof on pillars. The remains of Persian and Assyrian palaces, may illustrate the style of architecture employed in the royal buildings of David and Solomon.

The scarcity of wood in oriental countries, had an influence upon architecture, where bricks or stone were used instead. The Saracenic style originated in the seventh century, A. D., and soon extended from Persia to the ocean. The creed of Mohammed forbade the use of painting and sculpture, therefore there was a style of architecture developed peculiar to his system. The houses of the higher classes were usually built in a hollow square. The private apartments were on three sides, while the fourth was on the street, with a gate, and intended for the use of the servants. The plan of having the front of the house towards the street, would be an infringe-

ment on the privacy of oriental domestic life. The windows opened upon the interior court which was adorned by plants and furnished with fountains. Some houses had two or three courts, communicating with one another. The house-tops were an important feature, and were used for various purposes. Besides the windows opening upon the interior of the court, there were also those projecting from the building, and frequently overhanging the street, while another peculiarity of oriental architecture, was the kiosk or open summerhouse, supported on pillars.

The better class of houses were built of stone comprising marble, and were profusely ornamented with rich velvet hangings of bright colors supported on hooks, and could be removed at pleasure. The upper part of the wall was adorned with figures in stucco, with gold, silver, gems, and ivory, hence the expression "ivory houses," referred to in the Scriptures. In the time of the Prophet Jeremiah, these chambers were ceiled with costly and fragrant wood painted in the richest colors. The Persians were accustomed to use marble very freely in their buildings, as the ruins of Persepolis prove. The Book of Esther suggests the same idea. The kitchen was always in the interior court, where the women-servants performed their labors, some-

times assisted by the ladies of the family. These kitchens were not supplied with fireplaces, but the cooking was done by the use of charcoal in braziers, though wood fires were sometimes made in the open court.

There were, usually, no doors to the rooms of eastern dwellings, but the openings were closed by curtains, and the windows were latticed, as glass was not used, or they were closed by shutters with openings for light. When there was no upper story, the rooms were usually higher, in most oriental countries, but in Persia they are open from top to bottom.

The ancient religion of the Persians originated with Zoroaster, the author of the Zend-Avesta, and a reformer of the Magian system. The work ascribed to him contained his pretended revelations which the early Magians and later Parsees revered as Christians do the Sacred Scriptures. The Zend or Zend-Avesta teaches the doctrine of a Supreme Being, eternal and self-existent, the Creator of all material things, and of light and darkness, between which a conflict exists and will continue to exist until the end of the world. He taught that there will be a general judgment when a just retribution will be administered to every one according to his works, and the angel of darkness with his followers will be consigned to everlasting punishment and

the angel of light with his associates will be admitted to everlasting light and happiness.

It is evident that these doctrines were copied, with some modifications, from the Sacred Scriptures.

The name Zoroaster signifies chief, senior, and high priest, common designations for a spiritual guide. He was a native of Bactria, a region in the vicinity of the Hindu-Kush mountains, but there is little authentic history of his life. The Zend was the language in which the sacred books of Zoroaster were written. After the Arabian conquest, in the seventh century, A. D., the Mohammedan faith became the state religion and still maintains its supremacy, in Persia. Christianity was early introduced into this country, when terrible persecutions followed, beginning in 330 A. D., and in forty years, more than 16,000 suffered martyrdom.

Magi was a name given to the order of priests and religious teachers among the Medes and Persians, and was derived from a word signifying priest. There is, however, proof that this class existed among other Eastern nations, especially the Chaldeans, but in classical literature, they are almost exclusively connected with Persian history. Herodotus represents them as constituting one of the tribes among the Medes, and very influential in the government of the Median Em-

pire. They became so powerful in Persia, that on the death of Cambyses, they attempted to overthrow the Persian dynasty and appoint one of their number, king. The defeat of this plot by Darius was followed by a general massacre of the Magi, but the fall of the Persian Empire was favorable to them and they appear in history again, during the later Roman Empire, and the commencement of the present era. It is said that Zoroaster taught his creed to the Magi whom he divided into three classes—learners, masters, and perfect scholars. They alone could teach the truths and perform the ceremonies of religion, foretell future events, interpret dreams and omens, and ascertain the will of Ormuzd, by acts of divination. Ormuzd was the good principle of the Magi whose symbol was light, and who was the author of all good. Their forms of worship were strictly defined, and were handed down to the Magi by traditions. They appear to have been the sole possessors of all the science of their age, and to be instructed in their learning was esteemed the highest privilege, and allowed, with rare exceptions, to none except princes and the royal family. Their learning became celebrated at an early period in Greece, and was the subject of speculation to the philosophers, but the ignorant were imposed upon by their tricks and high pretensions. Besides being

priests and men of learning, the Magi appear to have exercised judicial power.

The early inhabitants of Persia comprised nomadic tribes of the Indo-European stock who called themselves by a name signifying noble or honorable, applied especially to the followers of Zoroaster. According to Herodotus, they were divided into three classes: first, the nobles and warriors; second, the agricultural and other settlers; third, the nomadic tribes.

The Persians bore a close affinity to the Medes and followed the same customs and religion, though their simple habits preserved them from the corrupt influences that caused the degeneracy of the Medes, when they obtained the supremacy under Cyrus, the founder of the great Persian Empire, B. C. 559. But little is known of the authentic history of Persia before this date. The capital cities were Pasargardæ and Persepolis.

The most prominent rulers of ancient Persia were Cyrus the Great, Cambyzes, Darius I., Xerxes I., Artaxerxes I. (Longimanus), Xerxes II., Darius II., Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon), Artaxerxes III., Darius III. (Codomannus), whose successive reigns extended from 559 to 331 B. C., when the ancient kingdom of Persia closes. The natives date their independence from the overthrow of the Parthian Empire, after it had continued 476 years.

Artaxerxes is the name of four Persian kings one of whom Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned 465-425 B. C., is supposed by some writers, to have been the Ahasuerus of the Scriptures who occupied the throne in the time of Esther and Mordecai. Different reasons have been given for his cognomen—Longimanus—Longhanded. He was the son of Xerxes I. His reign was disturbed by insurrections and wars with other nations, including the Greeks, in which he was defeated both on land and sea, and was forced to conclude a peace favorable to his antagonist.

Artaxerxes II., of Persia, received the surname of Mnemon, on account of his remarkable memory. He was the son of Darius II., and reigned 405-359 B. C. His kingdom was imperilled by a revolt of Cyrus his younger brother who was killed in a battle 401 B. C. Artaxerxes III., 359-338 B. C., began his reign by the murder of all the members of his family to avoid any rivals, but he was poisoned and was succeeded by his son.

The Ahasuerus of the Scriptures, the sovereign who ruled Persia in the time of Esther, has been represented as different persons, but Josephus and some other writers, believe he was identical with Artaxerxes Longimanus. Some historians have supposed his mother was a Jewess, a descendant of Saul, king of Israel, and the favor

this prince showed the Jews, confirms the opinion though there are no historical proofs of it.

Ecbatana, a city of Media on Mount Orontes and enclosed by seven walls, is said to contain the tombs of Mordecai and Esther, though it is supposed by some writers, that their graves were in Hamadon. Artaxerxes Longimanus received his name on account of his long hands, and he was reported to have been the handsomest man of his time. He was a conqueror, and subdued Mesopotamia and Syria, captured Babylon and placed Cyrus on the throne.

Another theory in regard to Ahasuerus is, that he was identical with Darius Hystaspis, and that Vashti, named Alossa was his wife, and that Esther was called Artystana, but these views are not generally accepted. Haman, the prime minister of Ahasuerus, is represented in the Book of Esther as belonging to the race of Agag a common name for the princes of Amalek. Instigated by jealousy, he secured the king's decree for the extermination of the Jews. It seems almost incredible that a sovereign, without any reasonable cause, should order the massacre of a large part of his subjects, comprising a whole nation, but such a brutal outrage has its parallel in later times, as in the history of the Greeks, during a war between Turkey and Russia in 1770, though the decree of Hassan Pasha was not executed.

Ahasuerus was a powerful and luxurious prince whose dominions extended from India to Ethiopia, comprising 127 provinces. The winter residence of the king was Shushan or Susa, which received its name, probably, from the abundance of lilies it yielded. It was sheltered from the northeast winds by a ridge of mountains, but in the summer the heat was so intense that the inhabitants were compelled to cover the flat tops of their dwellings with earth. The city was highly embellished by Ahasuerus, and it was here the Prophet Daniel had his vision of the ram and goat. The Jews, in honor for the great favors shown their nation by this Persian king, named the eastern gate of their temple Shushan, and had a representation of the city carved on it. Susa was conquered by Alexander the Great, though it still exists under the name of Valdek. It is said to contain the tomb of Daniel.

Ecbatana was a city of Media and next to Nineveh and Babylon, was one of the strongest and most beautiful cities of the East. After Media was united to Persia, it became the summer residence of the Persian kings. Here are supposed to be the tombs of Mordecai and Esther, covered by a dome with inscriptions in Hebrew. This city was surrounded by seven walls of unequal height, and it still exists under the name of Hammedon.



Triumph of Modocai.

The Jews had been conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, their capital destroyed and the nation transported to Babylon as captives where they remained until the conquest of the city by the Persians, when many of them were taken to Persia where they were allowed greater liberties, and some of them were promoted to official positions in the Empire. Among these captive Jews was Mordecai whose history is intimately connected with that of Esther, the heroine of the story. He was the son of Jair, of the tribe of Benjamin, and cousin to Hadassa, the Jewish name of Esther, whose parents died when she was a child. Mordecai adopted the young orphan as his own daughter and performed the duties of a parent. She was a beautiful and an attractive child, qualities that had a powerful influence in her future career. Her protector, undoubtedly, carefully trained her in the religion of her nation which, at a heathen court, she never forgot or neglected, it is presumed.

CHAPTER III.

ROYAL FESTIVALS.

AHASUERUS, the king of Persia, after reigning two years, entertained his subjects by sumptuous festivals. The first banquet was given to the princes, nobles, the rulers of the 127 provinces of his empire, and the court officials, at his winter palace in Shushan, and continued six months, when the glory, magnificence and power of the sovereign were witnessed by his admiring guests. After the festival of the princes, nobles and court officers ended, the king gave a feast to the common people in the court of the garden of his palace at Susa, which continued seven days, and was attended by all the magnificence displayed at the festival of the princes and nobles.

The court with its tessellated pavement of red, white, blue and black marbles, its pillars of marble with green, blue, and white tapestries fastened with cords of linen to silver rings, gold and silver couches, gold drinking vessels all different from one another, exhibited the splendor and magnificence of the Persian court. The freedom of the guests, each one being allowed to

do as he pleased, enhanced the pleasure of the feast. These enjoyments were not confined to the men alone, for Vashti the queen, made a feast for the women of the palace. Some of the princes were present at the feast given to the common people.

The king, under the influence of wine, probably, attempted to infringe upon an established custom, by commanding the queen to appear at the feast for the men, wearing the royal crown. He sent his chamberlains to conduct her to his presence, that the princes and people might admire her beauty. Vashti refused to go and become the object of wonder to the intoxicated courtiers. The king was exceedingly angry that the queen should presume to disobey his orders. What ought to be done about it, since the queen's refusal was publicly known?

Ahasuerus had, for his advisers, seven princes of Persia and Media, who understood the laws and judged cases, and who were next to the king in power, and were his counsellors. He asked them what punishment ought to be administered to the disobedient queen, according to the laws.

Memucan, one of the princes, replied, "The queen had not only done wrong to the king, but also to the princes and all the people in the provinces of Ahasuerus for, when it is fully understood that his authority in his household has

been set aside, all the women in his dominions will despise their husbands, and there will be serious trouble. If agreeable to the king, let him issue a royal decree and have it written among the laws of the Medes and Persians which cannot be changed, that Vashti be divorced, and another wife superior to her, be chosen queen. Then after the decree is known throughout the king's dominions, all wives will honor their husbands, from the highest to the lowest ranks."

The advice of Memucan pleased his Majesty, who sent letters into all the provinces, written in the different languages used by the people, that every man should rule his own house, a right usually claimed in all countries and in all ages. Not until the queen was legally divorced was the wrath of the king appeased, but it is probable that after the effects of his dissipation had passed away, he thought of his beautiful queen with regret, and blamed his counsellors for the rash step he had taken, therefore his servants, to calm his feelings and make him forget his domestic trouble, advised him to choose another queen to take the place of Vashti. They recommended that a number of beautiful young maidens be selected from the women of his kingdom by officers in all the provinces of the empire, and conducted to Shushan, to be placed in the palace for the women, under the custody of Hege, the king's chamberlain and

overseer of the females, and that such articles be given them as were needed in their preparations for royal honors, such as oil of myrrh, sweet odors and other articles. Each maiden went in the evening to the royal palace and returned to the house of the women, under the care of the king's chamberlain, but did not go again unless called by name.

When Esther, the Jewish maiden, was called to go to the king, she followed the directions of Hege, and when Ahasuerus saw the beautiful girl, he was fascinated, and without inquiring about her nationality, he chose her to succeed Vashti, and placed the royal crown upon her head. He then gave a feast to his princes and servants and conferred special favors and gifts upon his guests. Following the advice of Mordecai, Esther had not revealed her nationality. This friend of the young girl was her cousin, but adopted the orphan child as his own. He was taken a captive to Babylon, probably when young, and after the overthrow of the city by the Persians he went to Shushan, and in the first year of Cyrus, it is supposed he returned to Jerusalem with other Jewish captives, and then went back to Persia, and became the adviser of his relative after her promotion to the Persian throne. By refusing to pay homage to Haman, the king's prime minister, Mordecai incurred the enmity of

that official and imperilled the lives of all the Jews throughout the empire.

The question is suggested, Why did Mordecai refuse to respect the king's prime minister? It has been thought that the reverence given to Haman was similar to divine homage, such as was sometimes addressed to Persian monarchs, which would be regarded by the Jews idolatrous.

After the promotion of Esther, her adopted father was accustomed to walk before the court of the women's house to gain some intelligence from the queen. To inquire what occurs in the harem of an Eastern monarch is considered a crime, and one might pass by the court of the women's palace day after day without gaining any intelligence about what takes place within, and from what Mordecai told Esther in regard to the massacre of the Jews, namely, "Think not that *thou* shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews," it is presumed that crimes were sometimes committed there. It was certain that Haman would cause the death of the queen, being a Jewess, even in the harem.

While Mordecai was sitting one day in the king's gateway, an event occurred that had an influence upon his subsequent career. This was the discovery of a plot, by two of the king's chamberlains, namely, Teresh the porter, and Big-thana, to assassinate Ahasuerus. How the con-

spiracy was discovered is not related, but Mordecai informed Esther of the contemplated crime, and she told the king. The intended assassins were arrested, found guilty and hanged, and a report of the affair was registered in the Book of the Chronicles belonging to the king.

After the discovery of the plot and the punishment of the criminals, the king promoted Haman to the highest office in the government next to the sovereign himself, and commanded all his subjects to pay him homage; but Mordecai refused to comply with the royal edict, therefore the people at the gate inquired why he did not obey the king's command. This question they repeated daily, but as Mordecai continued to maintain his position, they informed Haman, when his anger was aroused, and he resolved to have his revenge. Scorning the idea of securing the punishment of only *one* of the Jews whom he hated, he would, if possible, destroy the whole race scattered throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus. This was in the twelfth year of his reign. The day for the massacre was to be decided by casting lots, which they continued to do day by day, and month by month, for a year, before the question was decided. This was probably due to the superstition in ancient times that some days were more favorable than others for the success of any undertaking, therefore Haman tried by

divination to ascertain the time most favorable for the accomplishment of his fearful tragedy. This was providential, since it gave Mordecai and Esther an opportunity to defeat the conspiracy.

Haman's argument before the king for the execution of his criminal purpose was, in substance, as follows: "There is a certain people throughout the province of thy kingdom, whose laws are different from those of the king, and who do not obey your Majesty's commands, hence it is not for the king's advantage to allow them to exist; therefore, if it pleases the king, let there be a decree issued for their destruction." Ten thousand talents of silver were to be paid by Haman, into the royal treasury, for the execution of the decree. Ahasuerus took off his ring and gave it to Haman, as a pledge that his request should be granted. The king told him that the silver and the persons for executing the order, were given to him to do as he wished.

The king's scribes were called to prepare the written proclamation according to Haman's request, addressed to all the lieutenants, governors of the provinces, and rulers of the nations in their own language, and in the name of King Ahasuerus, and sealed with his ring. The letters were sent by posts into all the provinces, to destroy all the Jews, young and old, women and little children, on the thirteenth day of the

twelfth month—Adar—and to take the spoils. The copy of the writing was published, that the people might be ready on that day to execute the royal command. The decree was given at Shushan and the posts were hastened to circulate it.

The king and Haman were so well pleased with their deed, that they indulged in a feast of wine, but the city of Shushan was much perplexed at the royal decree. There were, probably, some Persians who deplored the cruel order, regarding it as impolitic without reference to race prejudices. They, perhaps, feared it might cause a general revolt throughout the vast empire, while there may have been others who were pleased, on account of jealousy, that the hated race was to be exterminated.

When Mordecai heard of the king's decree, he was greatly distressed, and clothed himself with sackcloth, used with ashes, emblems of deep mourning, and went through the streets of the city weeping and uttering loud lamentations. He came to the king's gate in that condition, but no one was allowed to enter clothed in sackcloth. There were great mourning, fasting, and weeping among the Jews, in every province where the royal command was known, and many of the doomed people lay in sackcloth and ashes day and night.

Esther's maids and chamberlains came and told her of the king's decree, which had been kept secret from her. She was exceedingly grieved, but she did not wish to have Mordecai clothed in sackcloth, therefore she sent him raiment to wear instead, but he would not make the change. Then she sent Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains who had been appointed to attend the queen, to inquire what was the cause of his grief.

When Hatach, the queen's attendant, came to Mordecai in the street leading to the king's gate, he was informed of the particulars of the royal decree, and the sum of money Haman had paid into the king's treasury for the destruction of the Jews, and he gave the queen's chamberlain a copy of the writing for their massacre, and told him to urge Esther to go to the king and make supplication for her people.

Hatach delivered the message, when she sent her servant again to Mordecai, to remind him that it was a law throughout the Persian Empire, that whoever, man or woman, ventured to come into the royal presence without being called, should be put to death, unless the king held out the golden sceptre as a sign that he was pardoned for the offence, "and," said Esther, "I have not been called to appear at court, for thirty days." Mordecai returned answer that *she*

must not expect to escape more than other Jews, and if she kept silence, deliverance would come to them from other sources, while thou and thy father's house will perish. He then adds, "Who knoweth but thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

When Esther heard the message of Mordecai, she said, "Tell him to call together all the Jews at Shushan and fast for me three days and nights and I and my maidens will also fast; then I will go to the king, though it is not according to law, and if I perish, I perish." After three days of fasting, Esther put on her royal robes, and going to the palace, she took a position in the court, while the king was sitting upon his throne. She had taken her life in her hands for the purpose of pleading for her doomed countrymen.—Her loveliness excited the interest and sympathy of Ahasuerus, who immediately held out the golden sceptre when she drew near and touched the royal emblem. "What is thy request, Queen Esther? It shall be granted thee to the half of my kingdom." She replied, "If it please thee, come with Haman to a banquet which I have prepared for you."

Haman was very proud of the honor paid him, as a guest of the queen in company with the king; but when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate who did not bow down to pay him homage,

he was exceedingly angry, and returning to his home, he called for his friends and Zeresh, his wife, and told them of his glory, and wealth, and that the king had promoted him above all the princes and servants of his kingdom. Moreover, the queen had invited him only, with the king to a banquet, and that he was to attend a similar feast on the morrow. "Yet all these honors," he said, "have no interest to me as long as I see Mordecai the Jew, sitting at the king's gate."

His wife and friends advised him to erect a gallows fifty cubits high—perhaps seventy-five feet—"and then obtain permission from the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. This being done thou canst go and enjoy the banquet." The proposition pleased Haman, and he immediately ordered the gallows to be erected. During the following night, the king could not sleep. Perhaps he was conscious of having acted rashly in the matter of the Jews, and to divert his mind, he commanded his chamberlains to bring the book containing the court records, and read them. In these writings was the account of the plot of Bigthana and Teresh to assassinate the king, discovered by Mordecai. He inquired what honor had been rendered to this Jew for saving the king's life. The servants replied that nothing had been done.

Just at this moment Haman came to the outside court of the palace, to ask that Mordecai might be hanged on the gallows just erected. The king inquired who was in the court, and was told it was Haman. "Let him come in," said he. After Haman entered the palace, Ahasuerus said, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" Haman thought whom should he delight to honor more than himself. He advised his Majesty to have such an one arrayed in royal apparel and, wearing the royal crown, let him be placed on the horse used by his sovereign, and appoint one of the most noble princes to conduct him through the streets of the city and proclaim, "Thus shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor."

After Haman had given his advice, the king said, "Make haste and do for Mordecai who sits at the king's gate, what you have recommended." Though occupying the highest rank at court, Haman would not venture to disobey the king's orders. After he had done this, Mordecai went to his place at the gate, and Haman returned to his house mourning and with his head covered, as a sign of his grief and humiliation. He told his friends what had befallen him, when Zeresh his wife said, "If thou hast begun to fall, thou wilt continue to do so." While they were discussing the question, the king's chamberlains came in

haste to conduct Haman to the queen's banquet a second time, when the king asked Esther the same question as on a previous occasion.

The queen said, "If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it pleases thee, let my life be given me and that of my people, for we are sold, I and my people to be slain. If we had only been sold as slaves, I could have kept silence, though the enemy could not do the king a permanent injury." "Who and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do this?" replied the king. Esther said, "The adversary is this wicked Haman." This declaration made the guilty prime minister afraid, while the king was very angry, and leaving the banquet, he went into the garden. Haman in the meantime plead with the queen for his life, and in his distress he had fallen on the bed on which Esther had reclined. At this moment the king returned and found him in this position when he said, "Will he force the queen before me in the house?" The servant covered the face of Haman, and one of the king's chamberlains named Harbonah, said, "The gallows fifty cubits high which Haman made for Mordecai is in his house." The royal order was given to hang Haman on it, when the king's wrath was appeased. He delivered the family of Haman to the queen to dispose of them as she wished. She revealed her nationality to

the king, when he took the ring given to Haman and presented it to Mordecai and the queen appointed him over the house of Haman.

THE FEAST OF PURIM.

Esther made another petition to the king, prostrating herself at his feet, and beseeching him with tears to counteract the fearful doom Haman had planned for the destruction of her nation. Her request was briefly as follows, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight, let there be a royal decree to reverse the one issued for the destruction of the Jews in the king's provinces, for how can I endure to see the extermination of my kindred?" Ahasuerus said to the queen and to Mordecai, "I have given to Esther the family of Haman and him they have hanged upon the gallows. Write to the Jews in the king's name, and seal it with his ring that no one may erase it." The king's scribes were summoned, and in the third month—called Sivan, corresponding to June, and on the second day, the document was written according to the direction of Mordecai, addressed to the Jews, lieutenants, deputies, and rulers of the provinces, extending from India to Ethiopia, including 127, in different languages, in the name of Ahasuerus and sealed with his ring. The decree was that the Jews in every city were allowed to assemble

and defend their lives, and if they were assaulted by their enemies, they were permitted to destroy them, including women and children, and take the spoils.

A copy of this writing was published in all the provinces, when Mordecai and the queen confirmed the decree, and sent letters of congratulations to all the Jews, on their escape from an imminent danger. This decree was given at the palace in Shushan, and the couriers or posts as they were called, on mules, camels, and other animals, were hastened on their mission, by the king's orders.

After this decree was issued, Mordecai, arrayed in garments of blue, white, and purple linen, and wearing a crown of gold, left the royal palace amidst the rejoicing citizens of Shushan. When the time for the execution of the king's command drew near, which was on the same day of the month the edict of Haman was to have been executed, the Jews assembled in the cities throughout the provinces, prepared to resist those who attempted their destruction. All the rulers, lieutenants, deputies, and officers of the king, assisted the Jews so that they smote 500 in Shushan. When the king was informed of the affair, he said to the queen, "What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is thy petition and what is thy request?"

She replied, "If it please the king, let Haman's ten sons be hanged on a gallows," and he commanded it to be done.

Besides the number killed at Shushan, 75,000 were slain in the provinces, but the victors took no spoils. After this fearful slaughter, the Jews observed the fourteenth day of the month Adar or March, as one of feasting and gladness, and sent presents to one another, and Mordecai despatched messages to all the Jews to establish the observance as a national festival and call it the Feast of Purim. The name is a Persian word signifying lot because Haman settled by lot the day on which the Jews were to be massacred. The days of the festival, including the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month, were spent in making social visits and sending food to the poor, and congratulations to friends.

The story of Hadassah or Esther is one of the most remarkable and romantic of all the women of sacred history, it has been said, and her achievements are, perhaps, without a parallel, as she was the means of saving her nation from utter destruction. She was the daughter of Abihail, a Jew, and was a native of Shushan, probably where her life was passed. She was left an orphan at a very early age in a heathen land, but providentially, was adopted by one of her own countrymen, who trained her in the re-

ligion of her ancestors, and became her adviser during her remarkable career.

Esther was distinguished for her personal attractions, a circumstance that had a controlling influence on her future life, and united her fortune with that of the most powerful sovereign of his times, an oriental potentate whom she swayed by her firm will. From a captive slave to a queen, from an orphan of despised Jewish exiles to the wife of an absolute oriental monarch, are striking contrasts in the history of this remarkable woman. She had been educated by her cousin who adopted her, for the Jews were not allowed to neglect the education of their children, and her history proves she had been trained in the elementary branches of knowledge, at least.

Esther's zeal and devotion to her countrymen led her to propose a measure that might be questioned in regard to its humanity. This was for the execution of the ten sons of Haman. Probably some of them were old enough to take a part in the barbarous scheme of their father, but it could hardly be possible that all his sons were and some of them may have been young children. The only justification for the queen's demand is, that they might have become dangerous in exciting future conspiracies.

The character of Ahasuerus presents a combi-

nation of conflicting elements, as strength and weakness, pride and humility, nobility and meanness, cruelty and kindness, oppression and justice. His treatment of Vashti and his decree for the destruction of the Jews illustrate his rashness, and cruelty, while the honor he paid to Mordecai, exhibits his justice, and his yielding to the request of Esther, proves his susceptibility to female charms.

The Translated Saint.

CHAPTER IV.

ISRAEL'S GREATEST PROPHET.

AHAB, king of Israel, whose reign of twenty-two years, from 918 to 897, B. C., surpassed, according to the sacred historian, all the other kings of that nation, in wickedness. He was encouraged and assisted in his evil course by his wife Jezebel, the daughter of the heathen king of Zidon, who introduced into Samaria the public worship of Baal, Ashtoreth and other Phœnician deities, with all their abominations. She maintained at her own table, 400 prophets of the goddess Astarte, while Ahab, her husband, entertained 400 of Baal's prophets in like manner. This fearful corruption of morals and predominance of idolatry, proves the degeneracy of the people of Israel, and their bold defiance of the laws and worship of Jehovah, yet it is said there were 700 who had never bowed the knee to Baal, and among the faithful, was the prophet Elijah

whose remarkable boldness in rebuking the idolaters, endangered his own life.

The name Elijah means "Jehovah is my God." In the New Testament, it is written Elias, the Greek form of expression. His native place was Tishbe a town in Galilee, in the mountainous and fertile region east of the Jordan, but nothing is revealed of his early life, or of his family. He appeared as a supernatural messenger from another world, suddenly descending to declare the commands of God, and awe the proud king and nation, by the menace of fearful judgments.

Elijah was one of the most remarkable of all the ancient prophets. His character, it has been said, exhibits a moral grandeur heightened by the obscurity of his birth and early life. He was distinguished for boldness in reproof, ardent zeal for the honor of God, and indifference to ease and personal suffering. He was admitted to great intimacy with the Lord, and was endowed with the power of performing wonderful miracles. It has been said, that "He stood up as fire, and his words burned as a lamp." He is considered an impressive type of John the Baptist. The prophet Malachi said, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," and the Saviour declared that Elijah had come—in spirit at least—in the person of John. This remarkable

prophet, appeared with Moses at the transfiguration of Christ, and talked with Him about His future sufferings on the cross.—It has been stated that each three great dispensations of religion, had a translated representative; namely, the Patriarchal in the person of Enoch; the Jewish in the person of Elijah; and the Christian in the person of Christ.

Elijah is first introduced to the Bible student, as addressing Ahab king of Israel, saying, that “according to the word of the Lord, there would be neither rain nor dew these years.” In the New Testament the time is specified as two years and six months, consequently, all vegetation would suffer from the prolonged drought. The prophet received a Divine command to conceal himself by the brook Cherith, on the eastern side of the Jordan, probably to escape the wrath of Jezebel, where he would be fed by ravens with bread and flesh morning and evening. After awhile the brook dried up, when he was directed to go to Zarephath, in Sidon, where a widow would afford him a shelter. This was a city of the Sidonians situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, between Tyre and Sidon, in Phœnicia, and at a later period was called Sarepta. This was in a heathen country, yet the prophet was entertained with hospitality.

When Elijah came to the gate of the city, a

woman was there gathering sticks, when he said to her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water that I may drink." Perhaps he had been without drink during his journey from the brook Cherith. As she started to get the water, he said, "Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread." She replied, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse (or bottle) and I am gathering two sticks that I may cook it for myself and son, and then we must die." Elijah said, "Fear not, go and do as thou hast said, but make me a little cake first, and then one for thyself and son, for thus saith the Lord, 'The barrel of meal shall not waste, nor the cruse of oil fail, before the Lord will send rain upon the earth.'" The widow obeyed the prophet, whose prediction was fulfilled.

After a time, the son of this woman was taken sick and died, when his mother said to Elijah, "What have I to do with thee, O man of God? Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and slay my son?" Whether this woman had committed any special sin that called for vengeance, or whether she referred to her sins in general, is only conjectured. Elijah said to her, "Give me thy son," when he took the child from his mother's arms, and carried him to the upper chamber where the prophet lodged; perhaps it was on the flat roof often used for such purposes. He then

placed the lifeless boy on his own bed and prayed to the Lord, saying, "Hast thou, O Lord, my God, brought evil upon this widow, with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?" He then stretched himself upon the child three times and said, "O Lord my God, I pray Thee, let this child's soul come into him again." His prayer was answered, and the boy was restored to life, when Elijah carried him to his mother, saying, "See, thy son liveth." She replied, "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and the word of the Lord which thou speakest is truth."

During the third year of the drought, Elijah received a Divine command to go to Ahab and tell him, that "I will send rain upon the earth." The want of it had caused a famine in Samaria, and there was a great need of food for domestic animals. The king said to Obadiah, the superintendent of the royal household, "Let us go through the land and see if there may not be grass near the brooks and fountains, that we may save the mules and horses from dying of hunger and thirst. We will divide the land between us;" so they parted company, Ahab going in one direction and his superintendent in another.

Obadiah was a sincere worshipper of the Lord, and when Jezebel ordered the prophets of God to be slain, he concealed 100 of them in two caves, fifty in each, and nourished them with

bread and water. As he was on his way in search of food for the animals, he met Elijah, and, falling on his face, said, "Art thou my lord Elijah?" He replied, "I am. Go and tell Ahab, that Elijah is here." Obadiah said, "What have I done that I should be slain by the king? There is no nation or kingdom to which he has not sent to seek thee, and when the people said 'He is not here,' the king required an oath of them that they had not seen thee. Now, if I say that Elijah is here, the Spirit of the Lord will lead thee whither I know not, and Ahab will slay me. I have feared the Lord from my youth. Have you not heard what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid 100 of them in caves and fed them?" Elijah said, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will go to Ahab to-day." Obadiah departed and told the king who went to meet the prophet, and said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" The reply was, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house have forsaken the Lord and followed Baalim."

The prophet told Ahab to gather all the people of Israel to Mount Carmel, with the prophets of Baal numbering 450, and the prophets of the groves or Asteroth 400, all of whom were nourished at Queen Jezebel's table. This was to test the religion of Baal and that of the God of

Elijah, who, on this occasion, was the only representative of Jehovah.

When Elijah appeared before the people, he said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him, but if Baal, (be God,) then follow him." Baal was, perhaps, more generally known than any other heathen divinity. His worship prevailed in nearly all the countries of antiquity. It is supposed he represented the sun and his name is associated with that of Astarte the goddess representing the moon. Altars were erected to Baal in groves, on high places, and even on terraces of houses. It has been supposed that Baal was identical with various divinities. Human sacrifices were offered to him, and his temples and altars were generally on high places.

The scene as represented at Mount Carmel. Between 800 and 900 prophets of Baal and other pagan divinities richly clad and well-fed, proud and confident of their power and influence. Opposed to this host of heathen prophets, was only one persecuted, hunted, and obscure prophet, so destitute that he was fed by ravens, to vindicate his cause, the worship of the true and only God. When he said, "How long halt ye between two opinions," the people made no reply. He then said, "I only remain a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets number 450.

Elijah then proposed the test to prove whose God was the true one. Two bullocks were to be killed, their bodies cut in pieces and placed on an altar, one for Baal and the other for the Lord, but no fire was to be applied. The prophets of Baal were to call upon their gods, while he would call upon the name of the Lord, and the one that answered by fire, was to be God. The people said, "that was well-spoken." Baal's prophets killed their offering and placed it upon the altar as requested, and called upon Baal from morning until evening, saying, "O Baal, hear us," but no answer came, and in their vehemence, they leaped upon the altar, and cut themselves with knives and lancets until the blood flowed from their wounds. When they had continued their petitions until noon, Elijah, who was a witness of the scene, said ironically, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. He may be musing, or pursuing a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awaked." These exciting scenes continued until the time for evening sacrifice, when Elijah said to the people "come near me." Then he repaired the broken altar of the Lord, with twelve stones to represent the twelve tribes of Israel, and made a trench or ditch about it, laid the wood in order, killed the bullock and put the pieces of the animal on the wood. He then ordered four barrels of water to be poured on the altar, and

this was repeated three times, when the water filled the trenches. This was to prove that no natural fire had been applied.

The prophet of the Lord then offered a prayer to God that "It might be known that Thou art God in Israel, and I am Thy servant and have done these things at Thy word," etc. At the close of his prayer a fire burst forth and consumed the sacrifice, the wood, and even the stones and dust and dried up the water in the ditch. When the people saw the wonderful miracle, they fell on their faces to the earth and exclaimed, "The Lord, He is God." Elijah gave a command to "take the prophets of Baal, and not let one of them escape." This was done and they were brought to the brook Kishon and slain. The execution of the false prophets may seem cruel and unjustifiable, but it was, undoubtedly, a necessity to prevent the people from following their abominable practices. It is not likely that Elijah himself slew them, but it was done by his command, and may have been by Divine revelation. Jezebel had put to death the prophets of the Lord, and the death of those of Baal may have been in retaliation. They had forfeited their lives by their falsehoods, crimes and corrupt morals.

Mount Carmel, the scene of the tragedy, was on the coast of the Mediterranean, north of the plain of Sharon, and was about 2,000 feet in

height, with steep and rugged sides, and a level top. It was the residence of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. The brook Kishon, issuing from Mount Tabor, flowed at the foot of this mountain in its passage to the sea. Mount Tabor has been used as a figure of speech by the prophets Amos and Isaiah. There is a cave in it where, according to tradition, the prophet Elijah lived.

After the death of the prophets, Elijah said to Ahab, "Arise, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain," and the king, who had been greatly troubled by the prolonged drought, complied with the Prophet's advice.

Elijah, with his servant, went to the top of Mount Carmel and sat down upon the ground with his face between his knees. This is the first mention of a servant; previously the prophet is represented as being alone. While in this position, he told his servant to go and look towards the sea. He went as directed and reported there was nothing unusual. "Go seven times," his master said, and the seventh time he saw a small cloud of the size of a man's hand. "Go and tell Ahab to make ready his chariot before the rain stops him." The king obeyed the warning and drove to Jezreel, while Elijah ran before him, perhaps as the king's herald.

When Ahab reached his home, he told Jezebel what Elijah had done, and that he had slain all

the prophets with the sword. The queen then sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "Let the gods do so and more to me, if I make not thy life as one of them to-morrow." When the prophet received the queen's message, he immediately fled for his life, with his servant, and came to Beersheba, in the dominions of Judah, where he left his servant, while he went alone a day's journey into the wilderness, and there sat down under a juniper-tree, and said,

"O Lord, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers."

After he fell asleep, an angel awoke him and said, "Arise and eat." When the prophet looked about him, he saw a cake which had been cooked on the coals, and a cup of water at his head. After partaking of the cake and water, he lay down again, but how long he remained in that attitude is not known. The angel of the Lord came a second time and, touching the sleeper, said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for thee," meaning, doubtless, that he needed refreshments to give him strength to pursue it. Elijah obeyed the angel, and on the strength of that food he travelled forty days, until he came to Mount Horeb, near Mount Sinai, celebrated in the history of his nation, as the scene of remarkable events.

Elijah entered a cave and lodged there, expect-

ing, perhaps, to spend the rest of his days in this seclusion, but this was not the Divine purpose. The Lord said to him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" His answer was, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts. The people of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I only am left, and they seek my life." The Lord told him to go and stand upon the mountain—meaning Horeb. The prophet obeyed, when there followed remarkable phenomena. First, a powerful hurricane which rent the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces. This terrible tornado was followed by an earthquake, and then by a fire, but no communication was received by the prophet during these wonderful miracles. At last there was heard a low, calm voice, when Elijah covered his face with his mantle and leaving the cave, stood at the entrance, when the Voice said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" He made the same answer as before, when he was directed to return to the wilderness of Damascus and anoint Hazael king of Syria, Jehu king of Israel, and Elisha to be a prophet in his own place; for, said the Lord, "Him that escapes the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay; and him that escapes the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay. There are left 7,000 in Israel that have not bowed to Baal."

The prophet obeyed the command and found Elisha ploughing with twelve yokes of oxen. When he cast his mantle over him, Elisha left the oxen and ran after Elijah, saying, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow thee." Elijah replied, "Go back, what have I done to thee?" Elisha returned and slew a yoke of oxen, with which he fed the people, then followed the prophet and ministered to him.

The history of this eminent prophet is more or less blended with that of the rulers of his day, Ahab and Jezebel, king and queen of Israel, and is recorded in the lives of those sovereigns.

The time had arrived when this remarkable prophet was to be taken to heaven without suffering a natural death, the inevitable destiny of nearly all human beings. It is stated in the Scriptures, that he was translated in a whirlwind. Elijah was, undoubtedly, informed of his exit from earth by Divine revelation, and also of the time and place of the remarkable event. Accompanied by Elisha who may have been informed of what was to happen, as well as other prophets of the Lord, they came to Gilgal, when Elijah told his companion to remain there, for the Lord had sent him to Bethel, but Elisha refused, saying, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee," therefore they both went to Bethel. The sons of the prophets



Elijah in the Wilderness.

at this place, where there was a school for them, said to Elisha, "Do you not know the Lord will take away thy master to-day?" "Yes, I know it. Be silent." Perhaps he did not wish to be reminded of his loss. Elisha was requested to remain at Bethel while his companion should go to Jericho as the Lord commanded, but he refused to do so and they both came to Jericho, when the prophets of that city told Elisha that he would lose his master. Elijah requested his companion to remain here, for, said he, "The Lord hath sent me to Jordan," but Elisha decidedly refused.

Fifty of the sons of the prophets stood afar off to witness the scene that was to follow. When the two came to the river, Elijah took his mantle and folding it, smote the waters when they were divided, and they went to the other side on dry ground. After they had passed over, Elijah said, "What shall I do for thee before I am taken away?" Elisha answered, "Let a double portion of thy spirit, I pray thee, be upon me." "Thou hast asked a hard thing, but if thou seest me when I am taken, it shall be so, but if not, it shall not be thus."

As they went on conversing by the way, they were separated by a chariot and horses of fire, and Elijah ascended by a whirlwind into heaven, his mantle falling to the earth. When Elisha saw

the wonderful scene, he exclaimed, "My father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof;" and rent his clothes as an expression of grief at his loss. He took up the mantle of Elijah, and returned to the Jordan whose waters had resumed their natural course after the miracle performed by the ascended prophet. Standing on its banks, Elisha took the wonderful mantle and smote the waters, saying, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" when the waters parted and he crossed to the western side.

When the sons of the prophets at Jericho saw Elisha, they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on him," and went to meet him and bowed to the earth as an act of reverence. They said, "We have fifty strong men with us, let them go and seek for thy master, lest the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley." Elisha said, "Ye shall not send them," but they urged him to grant their request when he said "go." After searching three days without success, they returned to Elisha at Jericho, who said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"

The Faithful Friend.

CHAPTER V.

THE FARMER PROPHET.

It has been seen in the life of Elijah that his devoted friend Elisha was called to the prophetic office while pursuing his occupation as a farmer. He was the son of Shaphat and a native of Abel-meholah, the scene of Gideon's victory over the Midianites. The name Elisha signifies, "God my Salvation." The earlier events of his life are recorded in the biography of "The Translated Saint."

After the unsuccessful search for Elijah, the people of Jericho said to Elisha, "This city is pleasantly situated, as my lord seeth, but the water is impure and the soil is unfruitful." The prophet told them to bring him a cruse or bottle with salt in it, when he went to the spring of water and threw the salt into it, declaring, "Thus saith the Lord, 'I have healed these waters and thence there shall be no more death

in them or barrenness of the soil.'” His prediction was fulfilled.

After this miracle, Elisha left Jericho and came to Bethel, but during his journey a sad and fearful event occurred. As he was ascending the hill, little children came from the city and insulted the prophet of whom they had heard probably from their parents who might have been idolaters. They said, “Go up, thou bald head,” repeating the insult. The prophet turned and severely denounced their wicked conduct, when two bears came from the forest and killed forty-two children. Their irreverence proves the criminal neglect of their parents and the irreligious character of the inhabitants of Bethel who paid no respect to the aged prophet of the Lord. Elisha resumed his journey and came to Mount Carmel, then went to Samaria.

A war occurred between the Moabites and the confederate armies of Israel, Judah, and the Edomites. The allied armies were obliged to march through a region destitute of water, and consequently were greatly distressed, when Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, inquired of Joram, king of Israel, “Is there not a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of Him?” One of the servants of the king of Israel said, “Here is Elisha, son of Shaphat who served Elijah.” The king of Judah said, “The word of the Lord is with him.”

When the three kings appeared before Elisha, he said to the king of Israel, "What have I to do with thee? Go to the prophets of thy father and mother." "No," replied Joram, "for the Lord called together these three kings to deliver them to Moab." The prophet said, "Were it not for Jehoshaphat I would not pay any regard to your question. Bring me a minstrel." When the musician played, the Lord delivered to Elisha the following message, "Make this valley full of ditches. Though there will be neither wind nor rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water, both for yourselves and your animals. Moreover, you will gain a victory over the Moabites, capture their cities, even those defended by walls, fell all the trees, fill all the wells that no water can be obtained from them, and cover the fertile valley with stones," thus making them unfit for cultivation.

The next morning, after the usual offering, an abundance of water flowed from Edom and filled all the springs and streams which had become dry. An account of this remarkable incident and the result of the war, is related in the narrative of "The Kings of Israel." After this incident, the wife of a prophet's son, came to Elisha stating her grievances as follows: "My husband, who feared the Lord, as thou knowest, is dead, and his creditors demand my two sons

for bondsmen." Elisha said, "What can I do for thee? What have you in your house?" She replied, "Nothing except a pot of oil." "Go and borrow all the vessels you can from your neighbors, and be sure you get a large number, then you and your sons with closed doors, pour the oil you have into these vessels." She followed the prophet's advice and when one vessel was filled she said, "Bring me another," until all were filled, when she went and told the prophet, who said, "Go and sell the oil, and pay thy debts, while you and your sons can use the remainder."

Elisha in his travels, came to Shunem, a city south of Mount Tabor, celebrated in Jewish history, where there lived a hospitable woman, who invited the prophet to come to her house for rest and entertainment at her table. She said to her husband, "This is a man of God who often passes this way; let us give him the little chamber on the wall, furnished with a bed, table, stool, and candlestick." This arrangement having been made, Elisha said to Gehazi his servant, "Call the Shunammite woman." When she came, he said, "You have very kindly cared for us, now what can be done for you? Would you like to have your hospitality made known to the king or the captain of the army?" She replied, "I dwell among my own people." She may have intended

by this answer, that she did not desire promotion or remuneration even at the royal court. "What then can be done for her?" Gehazi said, "She has no child." When Elisha ordered her to be recalled, and said, "About this season, thou wilt become the mother of a son." He probably meant the next year. "No, my lord, do not deceive me." The prediction of the prophet was fulfilled, and when the child, on a certain day, went to the field where his father was superintending the reapers, and exclaimed, "My head, my head," as if suffering very severely, his father told one of the servants to carry him to his mother who held the child until noon when he died. She then laid him on Elisha's bed, closed the door and left him.

Going to her husband, she requested him to send one of the young men and one of the asses to go with her to the man of God, but she did not make known the death of their son. He said, "Why do you go to-day? It is neither the new moon nor the Sabbath." She replied, "It is well." After preparing for the journey, she said to her servant, "Drive in haste, and do not slacken your pace unless I bid thee." At length she came to the prophet at Mount Carmel, and when Elisha saw her at a distance, he said to Gehazi, "There is the Shunammite, run to meet her and inquire, 'Is it well with thee, with thy

husband, and with the child?" She replied, "It is well." When she came to Elisha, she caught him by the feet, and when his servant tried to remove her, he said, "Let her alone, for her soul is troubled, and I do not understand the cause." The woman said, "Did I ask for a son? Did I not say, deceive me not?" The prophet then understood that the child was dead, and told Gehazi to get ready, take his staff, (that is the prophet's), and go to the Shunammite's home, "but do not stop to salute any one by the way, and on arriving there lay the staff upon the face of his son." When the woman heard his directions, she said, "No, as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee," therefore Elisha followed Gehazi who went in advance, and laid the staff upon the child, but there was no sign of life, and the servant returned to the prophet and told him that the child had not awaked.

When Elisha came to the house of the Shunammite, he found her lifeless son on his own bed, when entering the chamber and closing the door, he offered a prayer to God, then extending himself upon the corpse, the child's flesh became warm, when the prophet left him for a while, then returned and performed the same ceremony, when the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. Elisha called his mother, and when she entered the room he told her to take

her son who had been restored to life. She fell at the prophet's feet as an expression of her reverence and gratitude, and taking her son, withdrew.

Naaman was the commander-in-chief of the army of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and had won the esteem of his sovereign by his honorable character and his valiant achievements as a soldier, but with all these advantages, he suffered with the terrible disease of leprosy for which it was supposed there was no natural remedy.

The Syrians were in the habit of making predatory excursions to the Kingdom of Israel on their southern borders and in one of these raids, they captured among other prisoners a little girl and carried her to Syria where she became a servant to Naaman's wife. The little captive respected her Syrian master, and said to her mistress, "I wish my lord could see the prophet that is in Samaria," (meaning Elisha) "for he would cure him of his leprosy." She had heard of his miracles and it is possible, may have witnessed some of them. Some one who heard her remark, told Naaman, and when the king of Syria heard the report he told his officer to go to Samaria, and he would send a letter to the king of Israel which was in substance as follows: "When you receive this letter, understand that I have sent Naaman my servant to thee, that you may cure

him of his leprosy." The king of Syria sent by his general, ten talents of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment as a present to Joram, king of Israel. When the letter to the king of Israel was read to him, he rent his garments saying, "Am I a god to kill and make alive, that the king of Syria should send to me to cure a man of his leprosy? See how he seeketh a quarrel with me."

When Elisha heard that the king of Israel had rent his garments, as a sign of his fear and perplexity, he sent to know the cause and when informed he said, "Let Naaman come to me and he shall know there is a prophet in Israel." Therefore the Syrian general with his chariot and horses, accompanied by his attendants, came in great pomp to the house of Elisha, who did not go out to see the king of Syria's commander-in-chief, but sent a messenger to tell him, "Go wash in the Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be cured." Naaman's pride was wounded, and he said, "I thought the prophet would come out to me, and calling upon the name of the Lord his God, would place his hands on me and cure the disease. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be cured?" The proud Syrian then went away very angry, when one of his servants said to him, "My father, if

the prophet had told thee to do some great deed, would you not have done it? How much better then for thee to 'wash and be clean.'” The argument of the servant prevailed, and when his master washed in the Jordan as the prophet directed, he was perfectly cured of his fearful disease. A change had occurred in the opinion of Naaman, and he, with his escort, returned to Elisha, saying, “Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel, therefore I pray thee receive a gift from thy servant.” Elisha replied, “As the Lord liveth before whom I stand, I will receive none.” Naaman said, “May there not be given thy servant, earth sufficient for two mules’ burden, for thy servant henceforth will not offer either burnt-offering or sacrifice unto other gods, but only unto the Lord. There is one favor I desire that is when I go into the house of Rimmon with my royal master leaning upon my hand, as is the custom, and when I bow down, that I may be pardoned for the act.” Elisha said, “Go in peace.” Rimmon was an idol worshipped at Damascus, where he had a temple. It has been supposed by some writers that this god represented the sun, and by others the planet Saturn. In regard to Naaman’s going to the temple of Rimmon, it has been thought it referred to his practice before his miraculous cure for which he asked forgiveness.

Naaman had gone only a short distance, before he saw Gehazi, the servant of Elisha following him, when he descended from his chariot and going to meet him, inquired, "Is all well?" The reply was, "All is well. My master has sent me to you with the message." There came two young men, sons of the prophets from Mount Ephraim, saying, "Give me, I pray you, a talent of silver and two changes of raiment." Naaman directed his servants to put *two* talents in a bag, then place ten changes of garments in another bag, and give them to some of the other servants who carried them to the tower, and Gehazi removed them to the house of the prophet. When the servants of Naaman departed, Gehazi returned to his master who said to him, "Whence comest thou, Gehazi?" The answer was, "Thy servant did not go anywhere." Elisha said, "Did I not know that the Syrian left his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, garments, and other gifts? The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee and thy descendants forever." Gehazi left the presence of his master a leper, white as snow.

The sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "The place where we dwell with thee is too small. Let us go to the Jordan, and each one cut a piece of timber to construct a more convenient dwelling." The prophet gave them permission, when they

requested him to accompany them, to which he consented. When they came to the river, they felled some of the trees growing on the banks, but one of the party, as he was at work, lost his axe in the stream, when he exclaimed, "Alas; master, it was borrowed." The young man was distressed about the loss of the axe, for he had no means, probably, for replacing it.

Elisha inquired where it fell, and when told he cut a stick and cast it into the water and, wonderful to see, the axe arose to the surface, and floated. "Take it up," said the prophet, "and return it to the owner."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FARMER PROPHET—CONCLUDED.

THERE was another war with Syria, when Joram, king of Israel, held a council with his officials and appointed the places for their encampments, when Elisha sent to the king telling him to beware and not pass a certain place, and when a courier was sent to examine the place designated, he learned its dangers. The warning was timely and, perhaps, saved the Israelites from defeat. This stratagem was repeated several times, which greatly perplexed the king of Syria, who suspected there was a traitor in his army. He inquired, "Will not some one show me who is for the king of Israel?" One of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king, but Elisha, the prophet of Israel, informs the king of Israel of the words thou speakest in thy bedchamber." The king said, "Go and bring him to me."

The messengers sent on this errand were told that the prophet was in Dothan, when the Syrian king sent a large force with horses and chariots by night that encamped about the city. When Elisha's servant had risen early the next morning,

and saw the powerful army of their foes, he said, "Alas, my master, what shall we do?" He replied, "Fear not, for they that are with us are more than they that are with them."

Elisha then offered the petition, "Lord, open their eyes that they may see." This was answered when they saw the mountains covered with horses and chariots of fire about Elisha, who said, "Smite them with blindness, Lord." Probably he meant the messengers sent to arrest the prophet and the advance guard of the king of Syria. When they had lost their sight, Elisha said, "This is not the way to the city. I will bring you to the man you seek." He then conducted them to Samaria and when they came to the city, he said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men." The king of Israel inquired whether he should smite them, when the reply of Elisha was, "No. Would you smite those taken captive? Set bread and water before them that they may eat and return to their master." The king of Israel prepared a great feast for them and then sent them to their own country, and the Syrians made no attack upon the Israelites at that time.

Ben-hadad, king of Syria, did not, however, abandon his hostile intentions against Joram, king of Israel, therefore calling his forces together, he marched south and besieged Samaria. The Israelites were not prepared for a siege, as

there was a want of provisions and the small quantity of food they had was sold at an enormous price. As the king was passing on the wall of the city, perhaps to inspect the enemy's camp, a woman cried, "Help, my lord, O king." He replied, "If the Lord doth not help thee, whence shall I help thee?"

The statement of the woman was fearful. One of her acquaintances said to her, "Give thy son that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow," but she refused to surrender her son after partaking of the first mother's child.

When the king heard this fearful story, he rent his clothes and put on sackcloth as an indication of his fear and abhorrence. He thought that Elisha was the cause of their national troubles, and resolved that he should be slain. The prophet was in his house with the elders when the king sent a messenger to execute his wicked purpose, but before the king's officer arrived, Elisha said to his companions, "See how the son of a murderer has sent to take away my head. When the messenger comes, shut the door, for the sound of his master's feet is behind him." While he was talking, the officer arrived, when Elisha said, "According to the word of the Lord, to-morrow about this time, a measure of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria." A lord, on

whose hand the king was accustomed to lean, answered, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, this thing might be." The prophet said, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not eat of it." For some reason, the assassin sent to take the life of the prophet, did not accomplish his purpose.

Four lepers were sitting at the gate of the city when they said to one another, "Why do we sit here and die? If we enter the city the famine is there, and we must perish. Now let us go over to the Syrians, and if they spare us we shall live, and if they kill us, we can only die." They decided to go to the camp of the Syrians, when they found it deserted; there was not a man to be seen. The enemy had imagined they heard the noise of horses and chariots and a great army, and supposing the king of Israel had engaged the Hittites and the Egyptians to fight for him, they fled in a panic leaving their camp with their tents, horses, and all their equipments.

When the lepers came to the deserted camp, they found plenty of food, silver, gold, and raiment. After securing these treasures, they said, "We ought to carry the good tidings to the king of Israel's servants immediately, for if we wait until morning something may prevent our doing so. Let us go directly and inform the king's household." They came and told the

porters of the city what they had seen, and the news was communicated to the king who arose in the night and told his servants that they probably knew they had no provisions, therefore they have left their camp and have concealed themselves, saying to one another, "When the Israelites leave the city, we shall take them alive and enter." One of the king's servants said, "Let us take two horses with their drivers, and follow the retreating army of the Syrians." This was done as far as the Jordan, when they found garments and vessels strewn along the way, which the retreating army had left in their haste to escape.

When the scout returned and informed the king of Israel about the hasty escape of the Syrians, the people went and destroyed the enemy's tents, when a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the prediction of Elisha. The value of the shekel, and the size of the measure varied at different times, but in this connection it is presumed the money value was small and the "measure" considerable. The king appointed the lord who sneered at the prediction of the prophet, to guard the gate of the city when there was so great a crowd of excited people, that they crushed him under their feet, and he died, thus fulfilling the prediction of the prophet.

Elisha told the Shunammite whose son had been restored to life, that there would be a famine for seven years, and advised her to go with all her family to some other country. She followed his advice, and went to the land of the Philistines, where she remained during the seven years of famine. At the close of this period, she returned to her own country, but her house and land had been occupied by others.

On one occasion, while meeting with the servant of Elisha, the king of Israel said to him, "Tell me all the wonderful things he has done." While the servant was relating the story of the Shunammite, she with her son came and appealed to the king for the restoration of their rights. The servant said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom the prophet restored to life." When he inquired of the woman herself, and after listening to her narrative, he appointed an officer to see that all her possessions were restored, and the value of the productions of her land during her absence.

Elisha went to Damascus, and when Bedhadad, king of Syria, who was sick, was informed that the "Man of God" had come to the city, he told Hazael, one of his officers, to take a present and go to him and inquire whether he would recover from his disease. Hazael collected valuable presents requiring forty camels to carry them,

and coming to the prophet said, "Thy son Ben-hadad, king of Syria, has sent me to inquire whether he would recover from his illness." Elisha said, "Go and tell him he *may* recover, but the Lord hath shown me that he will surely die." The prophet then wept and when Hazael inquired the cause of his grief, the answer was, "Because I know the evil thou wilt do to the people of Israel. You will burn their strongholds, slay the young men with the sword, and cruelly kill the women and children." Hazael replied, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do these evils?" Whether he was deceiving by the question or was deceived is not certain. Elisha said, "The Lord hath shown me that thou wilt be king of Syria." This announcement may have incited him to commit the crimes of which he was guilty. When he returned to his royal master the latter inquired what Elisha told him. "He said thou certainly wilt recover." The treacherous officer of Ben-hadad, the next day, took a cloth, dipped it in water and suffocated the king by covering his face with it. Perhaps his master was too weak to offer any resistance, or he may not have suspected the object of his murderer. After this tragedy, the assassin seized the reins of government, and subsequently inflicted upon the Israelites all the cruelties Elisha had foretold.

Elisha called one of the sons of the prophets and gave him the following order, "Get ready for a journey, take this box of oil, go to Ramoth-Gilead, seek for Jehu and say to him, 'Come with me to an inner chamber,' then pour the oil on his head and say, 'The Lord hath anointed thee king of Israel.' After this ceremony, flee and do not tarry." The young prophet went to Ramoth-Gilead, as commanded, and found the officers of the army sitting together, when he said, "I have an errand to thee, O captain." Jehu inquired, "Which one of us?" The answer was, "To thee, O captain," when Jehu and the prophet went into the house, the captain was anointed king of Israel, and received the command to smite the house of Ahab and avenge the blood of those destroyed by Jezebel. When Jehu returned to his company, he was asked if all was well, and why the mad fellow—meaning the young prophet—came to him. Jehu informed them he had been anointed king of Israel, when they hastily removed their mantles, and spread them on the top of the stairs, blew their trumpets and shouted, "Jehu is king." He rode in a chariot to Jezreel where Joram or Jehoram king of Israel was suffering from wounds received in a war with Hazael, king of Syria. There was a watchman on the tower at Jezreel who saw at a distance, Jehu and his

company, and informed the king, who ordered him to send a horseman to meet him and inquire, "Is it peace?" When the messenger came to him, he said, "The king wishes to know if it is peace." Jehu said, "What hast thou to do with peace? Follow me." The watchman reported that the messenger came to Jehu, but did not return.

The king gave orders for his chariots, when Joram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of Judah, each in his chariot, went in pursuit of Jehu and came up with him in the grounds of Naboth, the Jezreelite, when Joram inquired, "Is it peace?" The answer was, "What peace so long as the sins of thy mother Jezebel are so many?" Joram turned and fled saying to Ahaziah, "There is treachery," when Jehu drew his bow and smote the king of Israel, and he sank down in his chariot, when orders were given to remove his body to the field of Naboth the Jezreelite.

When Ahaziah saw what had happened to Joram, he fled, pursued by Jehu, who told his followers to smite him. He escaped to Megiddo and died there of his wounds, when his servants carried his remains to Jerusalem and buried them in the sepulchre of his fathers. When Jehu came to Jezreel, he caused the death of the mother of Joram, the wicked queen Jezebel.

Jehu's zeal led him to commit fearful cruelties among the families of Joram and Ahaziah. He ordered seventy of Ahab's children to be beheaded, and forty-two of Ahaziah's brethren to be slain, and also the priests of Baal, whose images he destroyed, yet strange to say, he adhered to some of the heathen practices of cotemporaries. (See Kings of Israel.)

The time had come for Elisha to be called home, to his reward, but before that event he had another message to deliver. During his last hours, the king of Israel came to see him and exclaimed, "O my father! the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Elisha told him to "Take a bow and arrows, open the window towards the east and shoot the arrow of the Lord's deliverance from Syria, for thou shalt smite the Syrians till thou hast destroyed them." Then the prophet said to the king, "Smite upon the ground." He smote three times and stopped. Elisha said, "You ought to have smitten five or six times, until the Syrians were completely overthrown, but now thou shalt smite Syria only three times."

After this interview Elisha died and was buried, but a miracle was wrought after his death, though how long after is not known. As the Moabites were invading the kingdom of Israel, a dead man was being buried, when in haste those

performing the ceremony, cast his body into the grave of Elisha. As soon as the corpse touched the bones of the prophet, the dead man came to life and stood upon his feet.

The Kings of Judah.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HEBREW SOVEREIGNS.

THREE kings governed the entire nation of the Israelites for a period of one hundred and twenty years, namely, Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, during forty years ; David of the tribe of Judah, during forty years ; Solomon, son of David, during forty years.

When Rehoboam, son of Solomon succeeded his father, ten tribes revolted and formed a separate government called The Kingdom of Israel, with its capital, first at Tirza a city of Ephraim, then at Samaria, a city built by Omri, king of Israel, who made it his capital.

The remaining tribes including Judah and Benjamin constituted a government called The Kingdom of Judah with its capital at Jerusalem.

Similar names are sometimes given to the kings of both nations, while many of the sovereigns of both were known by two different names, there-

fore to avoid confusion of ideas a list of the rulers of the two nations is given with the period of their reigns.

AFTER THE SECESSION.

Rehoboam, Abijah or Abijam, Asa.

Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and Naamah, an Ammonitess, succeeded his father at the age of forty-one, and reigned seventeen years, but his indiscreet policy caused ten tribes to revolt, and found a separate government known as the Kingdom of Israel. After the death of Solomon, his son went to Shechem to be crowned king over all the tribes, and when Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who had escaped to Egypt to save his life, heard that a king had been chosen, he returned to Palestine, and with a number of influential people, went to the king and petitioned for relief from their burdens exacted by Solomon, saying, "Thy father made our yoke grievous, now, therefore, ease somewhat the burdens he laid upon us, and the heavy yoke he made us bear, and we will serve thee." Rehoboam said to them, "Come again after three days," when he would make known his decision.

In the meantime he held a council with the old men who had consulted with Solomon, his father, on public affairs. They said, "If thou

art kind and wilt speak in a friendly manner, and wilt seek to please them, they will be thy servants," but the king did not accept their advice, and consulted the young men of his acquaintance. Their counsel was the following: "Say to them that as my father made your yoke heavy, I will add to it; and as he chastised you with whips, I will chastise you with scorpions," using an emphatic figure of speech. By scorpions were meant thongs set with sharp iron points or nails.

When Jeroboam and his followers came to the king on the third day to hear his decision, he answered them according to the advice of the young men. After the people heard it, they said, "What portion have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tent, O Israel. Now, David, see to thy house." All the tribes except Judah and Benjamin seceded from the government of Rehoboam, who sent Hadoram the treasurer of the tribute, perhaps to conciliate the revolt, when they stoned him to death. This alarmed the king who, fearing for his own life, fled in his chariot to Jerusalem. After arriving at the capital, he collected 180,000 warriors to fight Israel, in order to restore the kingdom, but a prophet came to him with the message: "Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go to fight your brethren.

Return every man to his house, for this rebellion has been according to My will." They obeyed the message and did not go to war against Jeroboam.

King Rehoboam was not without followers, for a large number of his countrymen still maintained their allegiance to him. He gave his attention to building cities for defence, a necessary precaution against his enemies. These cities, fifteen in all throughout Judah and Benjamin, were surrounded by walls. He also fortified his strongholds or fortresses, by greater securities, and placed in them shields, spears, stores of food, oil and wine, and appointed captains to command these forts. From these military preparations, he appears to have expected future trouble with the rebellious tribes, at least for his successors, which did occur many times for centuries.

The priests and Levites in Israel left their possessions and came to the king of Judah, because Jeroboam and his sons had excluded them from the priests' office, and had ordained priests for the "High Places," for devils, and for the gold calves. However, those decided to seek the Lord God of Israel, from all the tribes, came to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, and during several years, they followed the example of David and Solomon—before his apostasy—in religious services.

According to the customs of the times, Reho-

boam was a polygamist and had a number of wives and children. He appointed Abijah, one of his sons, ruler over his brethren, dispersed his large family throughout the regions of Judah and Benjamin, and furnished them with food in abundance.

Unfortunately, Rehoboam, after being established in his government, forsook the Lord, and was supported in his apostasy by his subjects, therefore as a punishment, the Lord permitted an enemy to invade his kingdom. This was Shishak, king of Egypt, who came with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 cavalry, and a very large number of infantry. They captured many of the walled cities of Judah, and then came to the capital, when a prophet was sent to Rehoboam and the princes, who had come to Jerusalem on account of the danger, with the message; "Ye have forsaken Me, saith the Lord, therefore I have left you in the hand of Shishak." When they heard this message, the king and princes humbled themselves and exclaimed, "The Lord is righteous." When another communication was received, that because they had humbled themselves, they should not be destroyed, but they would become servants of the king of Egypt, who came to Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, also of the royal palace, including the gold shields Solomon made.

After this plunder, Rehoboam made shields of brass and gave them to the guard who kept the entrance to the palace. They were finally placed in the guard-chamber. Rehoboam strengthened the fortifications in Jerusalem, but he did not seek the Lord with all his heart, and his reign was disturbed by frequent wars with Jeroboam, king of Israel. After the death of Rehoboam, he was succeeded by his son Abijah, who reigned three years. His public measures were open to criticism, but his descendants were established in the royal line, "for David's sake," as it is expressed.

There was war between the rival powers of Judah and Israel during the reign of Abijah, and after his death, his son Asa, one of the eminent kings of Judah, succeeded him as sovereign.

The name Asa in the Hebrew language signifies healer, or physician. Asa began his reign about 955 B. C. it is reckoned, and continued it forty-one years, the third in length of the kings of Judah. Though his father neglected the service of God, Asa was a righteous king and respected the laws of Moses. He is represented by his biographers as a man "whose heart was perfect with the Lord all his days," but this does not mean he was without faults, as the record of his life proves, but refers, doubtless, to his public acts generally. He, however, sometimes erred in

his management of government affairs and was reproved by the messengers of the Lord. Asa lived in a degenerate age, and was cotemporary with some of the wicked kings of Israel, but he attempted to reform the sinful practices of his countrymen. He began his reign by deposing Maachah his mother, from the office and dignity of queen, because she erected an image to the goddess Astarte, which the king burned in the valley of Hinnom. He removed the Sodomites, from his dominions, and destroyed the idols his countrymen had made, and brought the silver, gold, and sacred vessels into the house of the Lord.

During his reign there were hostilities with Baasha, king of Israel, who made an expedition to the kingdom of Judah, and began the construction of Ramah as a fortified place, to prevent any one from joining Asa. This induced the king of Judah to form an alliance with Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and send messengers to Damascus with presents of silver, and gold taken from the house of the Lord and from the king's palace. The envoys were instructed to say to the Syrian king, "There is a league between thee and me. Break thy league with Baasha, king of Israel, that he may depart from me."

Ben-hadad consented to Asa's proposal, and sent captains of his army with their forces who

captured some of the cities of Israel. When Baasha heard of it, he abandoned Ramah and retired to Tirzah, then the capital of his kingdom.

Asa issued a proclamation and sent it throughout his dominions, that the stones intended for building Ramah, should be taken for the construction of the cities of Geba and Mizpah. After the alliance of Asa with the king of Syria, Hanani the prophet, came to him and said, "Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not on the Lord thy God, therefore the host of Syria will escape out of thy hand. Thou hast acted foolishly, therefore henceforth thou shalt have wars." Asa was angry with the prophet, cast him into prison and oppressed some of the people, those probably who sustained the prophet's cause.

The king said to his subjects, "Let us build cities with walls and gates of brass while we possess the land, that we may be defended against the dangers of war." He had an army of 300,000 men of the tribe of Judah who used targets and spears, and 280,000 of the tribe of Benjamin who carried shields and used the bow, "all mighty men of valor" as it is expressed.

The Ethiopians commanded by Zerah, with an army of 1,000,300 men and 300 chariots invaded the kingdom of Judah. Asa rallied his forces



Huldah and the Book of the Law.

and went to meet them, when an encounter took place in the valley of Zephathah, at Mareshah. The king of Judah, on this occasion, did not trust in his army alone for success, but he sought Divine assistance. He said, "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to assist whether with many or with them who have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name go against this multitude. O Lord our God, let no man prevail against Thee."

The battle began when victory was on the side of the weakest, and the vast army of the Ethiopians fled and were pursued by the conquerors as far as Gerar, in the south of Judah. They were in such haste to escape, they left great spoils which the victors took, and smote all the cities about Gerar, destroyed the tents for the cattle and drove away the sheep and camels left by the enemy in great numbers, and then returned to Jerusalem.

The prophet Azariah went to meet Asa and his soldiers, and said to them, "Hear me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you as long as you are with Him. If ye seek Him, He will be found, but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you. For a long time, Israel has been without the true God, without a priest to teach them, and without law, but when in their trouble, they turned to the Lord God of Israel, He was

found of them. In those times there was no peace, and only great tribulation when they were conquered by other nations, and their cities were destroyed. Be ye strong and you will receive a reward."

When Asa heard these words, he was encouraged, and gathering his subjects with those of the other tribes who followed him when they saw the Lord was with him, he returned to Jerusalem and offered the spoils taken from the enemy, comprising 700 oxen, and 7,000 sheep, and made a covenant to serve the Lord with all the heart and soul, and that whoever should not seek Him should be put to death, whether old or young, man or woman. The people responded to the covenant with shouts and sounds of trumpets and cornets.

The deliverance of the people of Judah from imminent peril was remarkable since the danger occurred before their alliance with the Syrians, therefore they did not expect any assistance from them.

In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet which caused great suffering, and perhaps his death. He sought help from physicians, but they could afford him no relief. He died after a reign of forty-one years and was buried in the sepulchre he made for himself in Jerusalem. His tomb

was filled with sweet odors and different spices prepared by apothecaries. It is said the people made a very great burning for him which may have been sacrifices on the occasion of his burial, to show their respect and attachment to their departed king.

The reforms of Asa consisted mainly in removing the altars of false gods and the high places, where heathen worship was offered, in destroying the images of pagan divinities and cutting down the groves dedicated to them, and enjoining upon his subjects the worship of the true God. During a period of ten years' peace with other nations, he gave his attention to improving his own dominions, and building new cities.

The Scriptures represent Asa as an example of ardent zeal for the worship of the Supreme God, which was true, yet like all human beings he had faults. He neglected to destroy all the High Places which may have been to conciliate those inclined to idolatry. His application to the Syrians for assistance was inexcusable, since it implied a distrust in the power and goodness of the Lord, while his treatment of the prophet whom he sent to prison, and the punishment of some of his subjects for their sympathy for the persecuted man of God, prove that a distinguished reformer and eminent king was not a

perfect example to follow in every respect, yet, aside from these faults, Asa was one of the illustrious kings of Judah and a benefactor to his nation, in a time of great peril on account of the degeneracy of the age in which he lived. He was succeeded in the government by his son Jehoshaphat, an honorable and worthy successor to his illustrious father.

CHAPTER VIII.

JEHOSHAPHAT, JORAM OR JEHORAM, AHAZIAH
OR AZARIAH.

THE fourth king of Judah named Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, ascended the throne at the age of thirty-five, and reigned twenty-five years, or as it is computed, from 914 B. C. to 889 B. C. He was cotemporary with Ahab and Ahaziah, kings of Israel, though he did not follow their example. It is said by his biographer, that, "He walked in the ways of David, and did not serve Baal, but sought the Lord God of his fathers," therefore he was firmly established in his government.

On his accession to the throne, he began to strengthen his kingdom by placing military forces in all the walled cities of Judah, and garrisons throughout the country and in those cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had captured. He appointed five princes, assisted by priests and Levites, to instruct the people in the different cities of his kingdom, who carried with them copies of the Book of the Law of the Lord. These princes and priests were travelling missionaries, but there is no special record of their

labors, though these messengers of truth, doubtless, faithfully performed their duty, while the plan is creditable to Jehoshaphat. His influence was recognized by cotemporary nations, and they considered it the safest policy not to engage in a war with him. Even the Philistines, a formidable enemy of his nation, brought him presents in silver, and the Arabians gave him flocks, comprising 7,700 sheep and 7,700 goats. The character of the gifts presented by the Arabs suggests the idea that the chief occupation of this ancient nation was that of shepherds. The recognition of his power by foreign countries, increased the popularity and wealth of the king of Judah, and he constructed storehouses for his use, and castles for defence. His army at Jerusalem, composed of the most valiant soldiers whose commander-in-chief, Admah, had under his direct control 300,000 soldiers, and next to him in rank was Jehohanan with 280,000. The third was Amariah commanding 200,000, the fourth, Eliada of the tribe of Benjamin with 200,000 armed with bow and shield, and the fifth was Jehozabad with 180,000 men. The whole number comprised 1,160,000 soldiers regarded as "mighty men of valor."

Jehoshaphat formed an alliance with Ahab, king of Israel, which proved a dangerous league. He was engaged in a war with the Syrians and in-

vited the king of Judah to accompany him in his campaign against the enemy. His confederate, Jehoshaphat, replied, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people." Jehoshaphat then requested Ahab to inquire of the Lord about the result, when four hundred prophets were summoned to inform them about it. "Shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?" was the question. They all said, "Go, for the Lord will deliver it into thy hands." Jehoshaphat inquired, "Is there not a prophet besides these of whom we may inquire?" The king of Israel replied, "There is one, Micaiah, but I hate him, for he always prophesies evil of me." "Do not say so," the king of Judah answered.

Ahab called one of his officers and gave orders to bring the prophet Micaiah immediately, when he was conducted into the presence of the two kings, each sitting upon his throne, near the gate of the city of Samaria, and clothed in their royal garments, with all the prophets standing about them. One, named Zedekiah, had made horns of iron, and said, "With these horns thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed." All the four hundred prophets responded by saying, "Go to Ramoth-Gilead, for the Lord will deliver it into the hand of the king." This was a city east of the Jordan, in the mountainous region of Gilead, and was sometimes called Ramathan or Ara-

matha. The country in this vicinity was celebrated for its beautiful scenery, therefore was a desirable possession.

The messengers sent to bring Micaiah to the king, told him of the favorable prophecy that had been delivered, and advised him to predict success for his majesty, when the prophet replied, "What my God saith, that will I speak." When he came to the kings, Ahab said, "Shall we go to Ramoth-Gilead?" The reply was, "Go and prosper, for it shall be delivered into thy hands." The king, probably, believed the prophet spoke ironically, for he said, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing to me but the truth?" Micaiah then replied, "I see all Israel scattered as sheep on the mountains without a shepherd, and the Lord said, 'These have no master; let them return to their homes in peace.'"

Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell thee he would prophesy only evil?" Then Micaiah said, "Hear the word of the Lord. I saw Him sitting upon His throne and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and on His left. He said, 'Who will entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?' There was a difference in their answers, one proposing one thing and another a different one, when finally a certain spirit said, 'I will entice him.' 'How shall it be done?' it was asked. 'I will

be a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets, and will say, go.'” Zedekiah smote Micaiah on the cheek, saying, “Which way went the spirit of the Lord from me to speak to thee?” The prophet replied, “Thou wilt see when thou shalt go into the inner chamber to hide thyself.” Ahab commanded his officers to conduct Micaiah the prophet, to Amon, the governor of the city, and Joash, the king’s son, and tell them to put him in prison and feed him with the bread and water of affliction until I return in peace. “If thou return in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me. Listen to me, all ye people,” said Micaiah. The kings of Israel and Judah went to Ramoth-Gilead to meet the Syrians, when Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself, but do you put on my raiment in order to deceive them.” The king of Syria commanded the captains of his chariots to fight with none but the king of Israel, and when they saw Jehoshaphat, they supposed he was Ahab, therefore they made an attack upon him, but he besought the Lord for deliverance, and when the Syrians learned that he was not the king of Israel, they gave up the pursuit. After this incident a certain man drew his bow and sent an arrow at a venture, which smote Ahab between the joints of his armor, when he said, “Carry me out of the host, for I am wounded.” However, he remained in his chariot

until the close of the battle at evening, when he died, and Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem, when Jehu, a prophet, went to him and said, "Ought you to help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? There is indignation against thee, though thou hast performed righteous deeds by removing the groves and preparing the people to seek the Lord."

Jehoshaphat, after the disaster at Ramoth-Gilead, made another journey throughout his dominions to encourage his subjects to serve the Lord God of their fathers, and appointed judges in the country and the walled cities, saying to these officials, "Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for me, but for the Lord. Let the fear of the Lord be with you, for He has no respect for persons or gifts." He then denoted the special duties of the priests and Levites, and closed his directions by saying, "Deal courageously and the Lord will be with those who do right."

The kingdom of Judah was invaded by an army of Moabites and Ammonites, and when Jehoshaphat was informed of the danger, he feared the result, and proclaimed a fast to be observed throughout all the land of Judah, when the people assembled at the capital to seek Divine aid. The king, standing in the house of the Lord, offered a prayer, appealing to God saying, "O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou

God in heaven, and rulest over the kingdoms of the heathen, and in Thy hand are not power and might so that no one is able to withstand Thee?" He added, "Art not Thou the God who gave this land to Thy people Israel? They have built Thee a sanctuary and when war, judgment, pestilence and famine visit us, and we cry to Thee in our affliction, wilt not Thou hear and help us? Behold, how the people of Moab and Ammon reward us for the kindness of our fathers in their journey from Egypt. O God, wilt not Thou judge them, for we have no power to meet that great army and we know not what to do,—but we look to Thee." When the king was offering this prayer, the people including the women and children, were standing about him, and a Levite at the close of the petition exclaimed, "Hearken, ye people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, thus saith the Lord, 'Be not discouraged because of the great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's; to-morrow advance to meet the enemy. They come by the cliff Ziz, and ye shall meet them at the brook near the wilderness of Jeruel; but ye will not fight. Arrange your forces, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord for He will be with you.'"

Jehoshaphat and his subjects bowed with their faces to the ground and worshipped the Lord.

while the priests and Levites praised Him with loud voices. Early the next morning the king, with his followers, went to the wilderness of Tekoa, when he addressed them saying, "Hearken, O Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, believe in the Lord your God, and ye shall be established, and believe in his prophets, and ye shall prosper." When the king had consulted with the people, he appointed singers to go before the soldiers, praising the Lord, and when they began to sing, those lying in ambush arose and rushed upon their comrades who were seized with a panic and killed one another. When the army of Judah came to the wilderness, they saw the dead bodies of their foes and a great abundance of rich spoils left by the enemy, such as precious jewels and other valuable articles, more than could be collected at once, and they were three days gathering the spoils. On the fourth day, they came to the valley of Berachah, where they halted and offered praise and thanks to the Lord for their deliverance, and then returned to Jerusalem conducted by the king and attended by the musicians with their harps and trumpets. When other nations heard of the remarkable deliverance of the king of Judah, they proclaimed the news and his name became famous.

After his alliance with Ahab and its unfortunate results, it is unaccountable that Jehoshaphat

should form another with Ahaziah, the successor of the late king of Israel who is represented as a wicked ruler. This alliance was for the purpose of constructing ships to sail to Tarshish to obtain gold, therefore Eliezer uttered a prophecy against the king of Judah, saying, "Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy thy works." The prediction proved true, as the ships were wrecked.

Jehoshaphat died after reigning twenty-nine years, was buried in the city of David and succeeded by his son Joram or Jehoram. He had other sons to whom he left valuable possessions, such as silver, gold and other precious things besides walled cities, but the crown he bestowed upon Jehoram.

The public acts of Jehoshaphat were generally in conformity to the Divine will; those of a different character have been mentioned. His reforms, however, were not always thorough, and he may have been sometimes influenced by state policy. He had faults, since he was human, and occasionally he seemed determined to have his own way, right or wrong, and for this he was rebuked by the prophets, but with all his errors he remains in history as one of the illustrious kings of Judah, and a faithful servant of the Lord in most of his public acts.

Joram or Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, succeeded his father at the age of thirty-two, and

reigned eight years. He married the daughter of Ahab and followed the example of the kings of Israel. During his reign, the Edomites who had been brought under the control of the people of Judah, revolted and elected a king for themselves. This rebellion caused a war with their masters, when king Joram went to Zair with his forces, made a night attack upon the Edomites who were defeated and fled to their tents, but they were not completely subdued, and therefore gave frequent trouble to their neighbors.

Joram died at the age of forty years, and was succeeded by his son Ahaziah or Azariah, as he was also called, when twenty-two years of age, and reigned only one year. Being related to the family of Ahab he adopted their views in religion, which were idolatrous. He formed an alliance with the king of Israel, whose name also was Joram, the son of Ahab, to carry on a war with the Syrians, when in a battle, the king of Israel was wounded, and returned to Jezreel to be cured. Ahaziah made a visit to the wounded king and was slain by Jehu, who also put to death the king of Israel. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, and daughter of Omri, king of Israel, heard of his death, she slew all the royal family except one member who was concealed, and seized the reins of government which she ruled six years, and then came to a tragical death.

CHAPTER IX.

JOASH OR JEHOASH, AMAZIAH, UZZIAH OR AZAIAH, JOTHIM, AHAZ.

THE history of Joash or Jehoash, king of Judah, is remarkable for its romance and its tragical ending. He began his reign, it is reckoned, less than a century after Asa, and from two to three centuries before Hezekiah. He was the son of king Ahaziah, and grandson of queen Athaliah. His father occupied the throne only one year when he was slain by Jehu. When queen Athaliah ordered all the royal princes of Judah to be put to death, Joash, then an infant, was concealed with his nurse, in a bedchamber, and was kept in privacy six years. During that time, Athaliah governed the kingdom of Judah, but in the seventh year of her reign, Jehoiada, the priest, summoned the Levites and elders in Judah and went to Jerusalem, when the people made a covenant with young prince Joash, in the house of the Lord, that he should reign over Judah.

A plan was formed in the following manner. One-third of the people were to act as porters of

the doors; one-third as guards for the palace; and one-third as watchmen at the gates. Besides these officers, there were guards placed in the courts of the Lord's house, to prevent any one, except the Levites, from entering, and if any one presumed to enter, besides the priests, he was to be put to death.

The Levites and the people followed the directions of Jehoiada the priest who gave to the captains of hundreds, spears, bucklers, and shields that had belonged to David, and were kept in the house of the Lord. These preparations were made to avoid insurrections at the coronation of the young prince Joash. Jehoiada arranged the men, each with his weapon in his hand, standing from the right to the left side of the Temple, near the altar, and about the king. Then they brought Joash, the young prince, and placed the crown on his head, while the priests anointed him and shouted "God save the king."

When Athaliah heard the noise of the multitude running and extolling the king, she came to the house of the Lord, and as she saw the young king standing by the pillar at the entrance, and the princes with the people rejoicing and sounding trumpets, and the singers with instruments of music, she rent her clothes and cried, "treason, treason." Jehoiada ordered the captains to remove, and slay her, but not in the

house of the Lord, therefore she was conducted to the "horsegate," and put to death. Jehoiada then made a covenant between the king and people, that they should serve the Lord. They went to the temple of Baal, overthrew it with its altars and images and slew Mattan, the priest of Baal, before his altar. Jehoiada appointed the officers of the house of the Lord, and called together the captains of hundreds, nobles, and governors with others, and brought the king from the house of the Lord to the palace and placed him upon the throne. He was seven years old, at the time of his coronation, and reigned forty years.

Some years after his coronation, he decided to repair the house of the Lord which had been neglected, and called together the priests and Levites for their instructions. They were to go to the different cities of Judah and collect money for this object. "See," said the king, "that ye hasten the work." This last injunction they did not heed, when the king called for Jehoiada and said, "Why hast thou required the Levites to take a collection? Was it not to repair the house of the Lord?" The sons of Athaliah had taken all the objects dedicated to the Lord and given them to Baal. At the command of king Joash, they made a chest and placed it without the gate of the house of the Lord, when a proc-

lamentation was issued to bring the collection that was required by the law of Moses. All his subjects were pleased with the plan, and cast into the chest their offerings which were brought to the office of the king, when his scribe and the officers of the high priest emptied the chest and returned it to its place. This they did day by day, and collected a large sum of money which was given to the workmen, masons, carpenters and others, who wrought in iron, and brass for the repair of the house. The work went forward until it was finished, when they brought the money that was left, to the king and Jehoiada, which was given for sacred vessels and spoons made of gold and silver.

After these repairs, the people made their offerings to the Lord, during the life of Jehoiada the priest, who died at the advanced age of one hundred and thirty years, and was buried in the city of David among the kings, as an honor for his fidelity to the Lord and to the king, but after his death, there was a sad decline.

The princes of Judah came to the king and persuaded him to forsake the Lord God of their fathers and serve idols, when prophets were sent to persuade them to return to Him, but they would not listen to them. Zechariah the son of Jehoiada said to the people, "Why do you transgress the commands of the Lord? Because

ye have forsaken Him, He will forsake you." They were offended and conspired to kill the priest at the command of Joash the king who forgot the kindness of Jehoiada, and killed his son. It was the wife of Jehoiada who concealed the young prince from Athaliah who intended to murder him.

At the close of the year, an army of Syrians invaded the kingdom of Judah, and coming to Jerusalem, killed the princes and sent the spoils to Damascus, and many of the people of Judah were taken captive. A conspiracy against the king was formed by his servants who assassinated him when he was sick in his bed, in revenge for his murder of the sons of Jehoiada. He was buried in the city of David but not in the sepulchre of the kings, and was succeeded in the government by Amaziah his son.

"The remarkable history of the childhood of Joash," says one writer, "the beginning of a promising reign, his thorough reforms, his method of collecting funds for the repair of the Temple were so successful, that the sad degeneracy of his later years and his tragical death are all the more pathetic." His reforms were, doubtless, largely due to the influence of Jehoiada, whose death was a great calamity to the king, as it revealed his weakness.

The eighth king of Judah after the revolt, was

Amaziah, son of Joash, who began to reign at the age of twenty-five, and held the reins of government twenty-nine years. His public life was not faultless, though he did many things that were right and for the benefit of his subjects. He followed the example of his father in his reforms, though he neglected to remove the "High Places" where heathen rites were performed. After his accession to the throne, he ordered the murderers of his father to be executed, though he did not include their children in the list, as was frequently done by other nations, for the laws of his countrymen forbade the fathers suffering for their children, or the children suffering for the deeds of their fathers.

Amaziah appointed captains of companies comprising thousands of men, and other captains over hundreds, throughout the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, according to their families. He took the number of those from twenty years old and over, and found there were 300,000 able men for his army that could handle the spear and shield. He also hired 100,000 valiant warriors from Israel, for 100 talents of silver which, according to different estimates, were equal to \$164,500 or \$191,600. These preparations were for an expedition against the Edomites.

A man of God came to him and said, "O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee, for the

Lord is not with them, but if thou wilt go against the Edomites, be strong for the battle." Amaziah said, "What shall we do about the one hundred talents I have given the army of Israel?" The prophet said, "The Lord is able to give thee much more than that."

The king separated the soldiers who had enlisted from Ephraim, and sent them away. They were very angry on this account and resolved on having revenge, therefore they made an attack upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria to Beth-Horan, killing 3,000 of the inhabitants and taking much spoil.

Having sent his auxiliaries away, Amaziah increased the number of his own forces, marched to the "Valley of Salt," attacked the Edomites and killed 100,000 people of Seir, and captured 10,000 whom he conducted to the top of a precipice, and cast them down and killed them. After the battle, Amaziah took the gods of Seir, set them up as divinities, burned incense and offered sacrifices to them, therefore the anger of the Lord was aroused against him, and He sent a prophet to him inquiring, "Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people of Seir? They could not deliver their own worshippers." The king said, "Art thou the king's counsel? Forbear, why shouldst thou be smitten?" The man of God replied, "I know the Lord hath determined to

destroy thee, because thou hast not hearkened unto my counsel."

Encouraged by his success against the Edomites, Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash king of Israel to challenge him to a conflict of arms, when he received the following reply, "The thistle in Lebanon sent to the cedar, saying, 'Give thy daughter to my son for a wife,' when a wild beast passed by and trod down the thistle." In this sarcastic reply, Jehoash intended, doubtless, to represent the king of Judah by the thistle, and the king of Israel by the cedar. "Thou hast, indeed, smitten Edom," said the king of Israel, "and thy heart is lifted up. Glory not in this to thy hurt, and fall, thou and Judah with thee."

Amaziah did not heed this advice, but engaged in a battle with the king of Israel at Beth-Shemesh, a place in the kingdom of Judah,—when the rash king was defeated and his soldiers fled each to his tent, leaving Amaziah, who was taken prisoner. The conquerors came to Jerusalem, broke down the wall at the distance of four hundred cubits, took all the gold and silver and sacred vessels from the house of the Lord and the treasures in the king's palace, and some of the citizens as hostages, and returned to Samaria.

After Amaziah was restored to his kingdom, he continued his reign several years, but finally

met with a tragical death. A conspiracy was formed to assassinate him, and when he became aware of the plot, he fled to Lachish near the border of Philistia, hoping, perhaps, to find safety with a foreign nation, but the conspirators followed him and accomplished their purpose.

His remains were taken to Jerusalem, and buried with those of his fathers. His death, it is said, was followed by an interregnum of eleven years, when his son Uzziah ascended the throne.

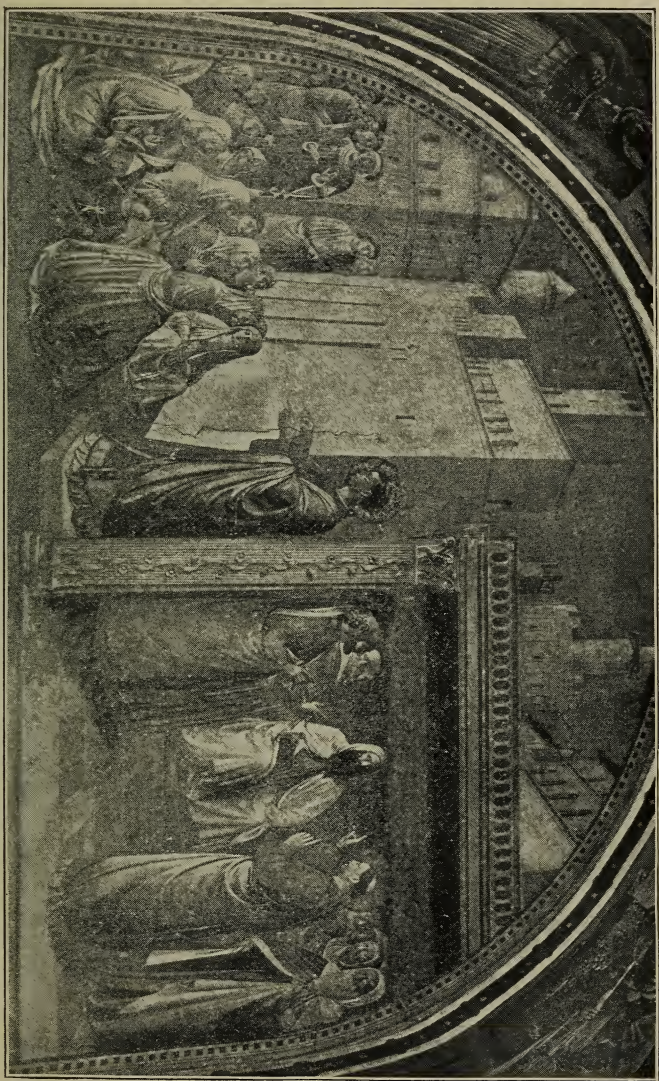
After the death of Amaziah, the people of Judah chose Uzziah his son, a young prince, sixteen years of age, for their king. His reign continued fifty-two years, one of the longest of the sovereigns of Judah. He is represented as a wise and just ruler, observing the laws of God during the life of the prophet Zechariah, and was prosperous when he kept his commands. However, he allowed the "High Places" to remain where the people burnt sacrifices, contrary to the law, and for assuming the office of the priests, he was smitten with the leprosy which afflicted him the remainder of his life.

Like some of his predecessors, he became involved in a war with the Philistines, during which he captured the cities of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod, demolished their walls, and constructed other cities in the region; he was also successful in a conflict with the Arabians.

News of his victories spread abroad even to the borders of Egypt, and the Ammonites sent him presents as an acknowledgment of their respect and friendship.

Uzziah won distinction by his architectural works. He built towers at the gates of Jerusalem and fortified them, and he also constructed towers in the desert, and dug wells for his use as he owned large herds of cattle in the plains and lower regions of the country. He employed husbandmen and vine-dressers among the mountains especially Carmel, for Uzziah loved husbandry, as it is expressed, as did many other ancient kings.

He kept a large standing army that went to war by bands or detachments, probably, according to their numbers as reckoned by a scribe, ruler, and captain. The whole number of leaders, chiefs, or captains in the army was 2,600, while the soldiers under their command were 307,500 valiant warriors. The king prepared for their use, military weapons, such as shields, spears, helmets, bows and slings, and caused engines, the work of skillful men, to be placed in the towers and on the bulwarks at Jerusalem. The fame of Uzziah as a powerful king reached other nations, and, doubtless, made him proud and self-sufficient, which led him to transgress the law by assuming the office of priest and going into the Temple to



St. Stephen Preaching.



burn incense. This was a sacrilegious act, and he was followed to the altar by Azariah the high priest and eighty other priests, who reproved the king, saying, "It does not belong to thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord; this belongs to the priests only, sons of Aaron who are consecrated to this office. Leave the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed, and it will not be for thine honor." The king who was holding a censer in his hand, for burning incense, was greatly offended with the priests for their rebuke, and while in this state of mind, the leprosy appeared on his forehead in the presence of the priests, when they said he was smitten with that dreadful disease, and hurried him out of the Temple, the king himself hastening to depart. He remained a leper the remainder of his days, dwelt in a separate house, and was never allowed to go to the house of the Lord nor perform the duties of a king which were discharged by his son Jotham as regent.

After the death of his father, he was chosen king at the age of twenty-five, and reigned sixteen years. He was disposed to govern according to the Divine will, and like many of his nation, he was fond of erecting new buildings. He made some improvements at Jerusalem and constructed cities in the mountainous regions of Judea, and castles and towers in the forests. He

was successful in a war with the Ammonites and made them tributary so that he received from them, one hundred talents of silver and large quantities of grain from time to time, during three years. However, he did not remove the "High Places" where the people performed religious rites contrary to the law. He was succeeded by Ahaz his son.

Ahaz, the successor of Jotham, began to reign at the age of twenty, and was king of Judah sixteen years. He pursued the heathen practices of the kings of Israel; offered sacrifices on "High Places," under green trees and on hills, and even offered his children to Moloch as burnt-offerings. He became tributary to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, and when Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, came to Jerusalem and laid siege to the city, Ahaz sent messengers to the king of Assyria, saying, "I am thy servant and thy son. Come and save me from the kings of Syria and Israel, who rise up against me." He took silver and gold from the house of the Lord and valuable treasures from the royal palace, and sent them as presents to Tiglath-pileser, who accepted the gifts. He was then engaged in a war with the Syrians and had taken Damascus, their capital, and slain Rezin, the king. Ahaz went to Damascus to meet the king of Assyria, and when he saw an altar which pleased him, he sent a pat-

tern of it to Urijah the priest, who made one according to the pattern sent him. When Ahaz returned from Damascus, he offered sacrifices upon the altar and commanded the priest to make the offerings according to his directions. He also made moulten images for Baal, and did many other things contrary to the laws of Moses, and as a punishment he was delivered into the hands of the kings of Syria and Israel. During the war, Pekah, king of Israel, slew in one day 120,000 of the subjects of Ahaz, including the king's son and the governor of his house, and 200,000 were taken captives together with great spoils, and brought to Samaria.

The prophet Oded came to the army of Israel, and said, "Because the Lord God of your fathers was angry with Judah, He delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them with great rage that reaches to heaven, and now ye purpose to keep the children of Judah for servants, but are there not with yourselves sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me. Deliver these captives, for the wrath of the Lord is upon you." Then certain men of Ephraim addressed the soldiers of the Israelites in charge of the prisoners, saying, "Ye shall not bring in the captives. We have sinned already against the Lord, and do ye intend to add to our sins, for our trespass is great and there is fierce wrath against Israel?" When

the soldiers heard these words, they left the captives and spoils with the princes and people, who clothed the naked among them and gave them food and drink, anointed them, and placing the feeble upon asses, brought them to Jericho to their brethren, and then returned to Samaria.

The Edomites again invaded the kingdom of Judah and carried away the prisoners. The Philistines also had taken a large number of cities and villages. Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to whom Ahaz had offered rich gifts for help, came, but did not assist him. In this time of distress, the king of Judah offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, for, said he, "Because the gods of the Syrians help them, I will offer sacrifices to *them*, that they may help me," but says the sacred writer, "they were the ruin of him and all Israel."

Though he died at the age of thirty-six, he inflicted upon his nation great injuries by his heathen practices. He cut to pieces the sacred vessels of the house of God, closed the doors of the temple, built altars in every part of Jerusalem and in the different cities of Judah, and made High Places for the worship of the gods. After his death he was not allowed to be buried in the sepulchre of the kings on account of his wickedness.

CHAPTER X.

HEZEKIAH, MANASSEH, AMON.

ABOUT two hundred and thirty years after the reign of Asa, king of Judah, another reformer appeared whose name was Hezekiah, meaning "Strength of the Lord." He was the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, and succeeded his father on the throne, at the age of twenty-five, and reigned twenty-nine years. The sacred historian gives a summary of his public life in the following words: "He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David had done," referring to the Psalmist as a ruler. Hezekiah did not follow the wicked example of his father, but in a degenerate age, when his countrymen were generally inclined to adopt heathen ideas and practices in religion and morals, he adhered to the doctrines taught by Moses.

The house of the Lord or temple had been neglected and needed repairs, therefore in the first month of his reign he began to improve it, and calling together the priests and Levites, said to them, "Listen to me. Sanctify yourselves and

also the house of the Lord, and remove whatever is offensive. Our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the sight of the Lord, and have forsaken His house. They closed the doors and put out the lamps and neglected to burn incense and offer burnt-offerings in the Holy Place, according to the law, therefore the Lord was angry with Judah and sent them trouble by allowing them to be the objects of contempt and astonishment. Our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons, daughters, and wives are in captivity. It is in my heart to make a covenant with the Lord God of Israel that His anger may turn away from us. My sons, be not negligent, for the Lord has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him and offer sacrifices to Him."

After this address, the Levites called together their brethern and they sanctified themselves according to the law, and went to the house of God and brought out everything considered unclean, and carried them to the Brook Kidron, to be destroyed. They began the work on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day they came to the porch of the Temple. They completed the work of sanctification on the sixteenth day, and then informed the king that they had cleansed the house of the Lord, the altar for burnt-offerings with all the vessels, the table of shewbread, and all that belonged to it. All the

vessels Ahaz had profaned, they purified and placed before the altar.

Hezekiah rose early and calling together the rulers of the city, went to the house of the Lord, when a sin-offering was made by the people according to the law. In the meantime the song used by David for such an occasion, was sung, accompanied by trumpets and other instruments, when all the assembly joined in the service, until the sacrifice was consumed, when the king and all present bowed and worshipped the Lord. After the songs of David and Asaph had been sung, Hezekiah said, "As ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, bring sacrifices and offerings to His house." Many brought their offerings comprising in all, three thousand nine hundred and seventy animals of different kinds used for such purposes. This was an occasion of rejoicing both to the king and his subjects.

Hezekiah wrote letters to the people of Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh requesting them to come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to observe the Passover, and a decree was issued and sent from Beer-sheba to Dan, that the festival ought to be celebrated at Jerusalem. Posts or heralds carried the king's letters throughout the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. In these writings he said, "Ye children of Israel, turn again to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and He

will return to you, the remnant that escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. Be not stubborn as your fathers were, but yield to the Lord and enter His sanctuary. If you turn to the Lord, you will be forgiven, for He is gracious and merciful."

The posts went from city to city throughout the country, but most of the people only laughed at and mocked them, except in the kingdom of Judah where they respected the king's command, and a large company assembled at Jerusalem to observe the feast of the Passover. They removed the altars devoted to false gods and cast them into the Brook Kidron and kept the festival according to the law. After these ceremonies ended, the people went through the cities of Judah and broke the idols in pieces, cut down the groves, utterly destroyed the High Places and altars, and then returned to their own homes. Since the days of Solomon, it is said, there had not been such a time of rejoicing in Jerusalem. Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and Levites and commanded the people to contribute to their support, when they brought tithes of all their possessions, and when the king and princes saw their gifts, they praised the Lord and blessed the people. Rooms were fitted up in the house of the Lord for storing the offerings for which overseers were appointed.

The use of groves for religious worship was a very ancient custom, and among heathen nations they became favorite places for idolatrous practices, hence reformers took special pains to cut them down. The brazen serpent made by Moses, became an object of divine homage to which incense was burned. Hezekiah broke it in pieces and in contempt called it "Nehustan" which means little brazen serpent.

Hezekiah was not permitted to close his reign without danger from other nations. Judah had been made tributary to Assyria, but the king refused to pay tribute, which was a dangerous position to assume. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had laid siege to Samaria the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and after three years, captured the city, and in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign the government of Israel was overthrown and the inhabitants were carried into captivity from which, as a nation, they never returned. When Sennacherib came to the Assyrian throne, he made a hostile invasion of the kingdom of Judah, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, and captured the fortified cities. The king sent to the Assyrian leader whose headquarters were at Lachish, a messenger, saying, "I have offended; return from me and whatsoever thou requirest, I will do." He gave Sennacherib three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents

of gold, besides all the silver found in the house of the Lord and in the treasury of the palace. He removed the gold from the Temple and the pillars he had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria. The value of a talent of silver has been estimated at nearly one hundred and fourteen pounds, and a talent of gold about seven thousand two hundred pounds, though the value of the talent varied in different periods.

The king of Assyria sent Tartan, that is his commander-in-chief, Rabsaris, attended by Rabshakeh, from Lachish, to Hezekiah, with a powerful army. On arriving at Jerusalem, they remained in the Fuller's Field, outside the walls of the city, and sent a message to the king of Judah, when Hezekiah requested Eliakim who was over the royal household, Shebner, the scribe, and Joah the recorder, to meet the messengers of the king of Assyria. Rabshaker said to Eliakim and his associates, "Tell Hezekiah, thus saith the great king of Assyria, 'What is this in which thou trustest?' Thou sayest, 'I have counsel and strength for war,' but these are vain words. On whom dost thou trust in thy rebellions? Thou trustest in the staff of a bruised reed, even Egypt. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is only a bruised reed. But if ye say, 'We trust in the Lord our God,' did not Hezekiah destroy his altars and High Places, saying,

‘Ye shall worship before the altar in Jerusalem?’ Give pledges to my lord, king of Assyria, and I will deliver to thee 2,000 horses, if thou art able to set riders on them. How then wilt thou turn away one captain of the least of my master’s servants and trust in Egypt for chariots and horses? Am I come against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, ‘Go against this land and destroy it.’”

Eliakim said, “Speak to thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it, but do not address us in the Jew’s language, in the ears of the people on the wall.” Rabshaker made the insulting reply, “My master sent me to thy master to speak those words, and not to the contemptible people on the walls.” The Assyrians then proclaimed with a loud voice in the language of the Jews, “Hear the word of the great king of Assyria. Let not Hezekiah deceive you, for he is not able to deliver you out of my hands. Neither make your boast in the Lord, that He will deliver you, and this city will not be taken. Hearken not to Hezekiah. Make an agreement with me, saith the king, by a present, and come to me, and every man eat of his own vine and fig-tree and drink the waters of his cistern, until I come and take your land so abundant in corn, wine, bread, vineyards, olive oil and honey, that ye may live and not die. Hearken not to the

king of Judah who says, 'The Lord will deliver us.' Hath any gods of the nations delivered this land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and other places? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?"

The people were silent and made no reply to the insolent speech of Rabshaker, for Hezekiah had given orders not to answer him. The king's messengers came to him with their clothes rent and told him what Rabshaker said, and when the king heard it, he rent his garment, put on sackcloth and went into the house of the Lord. He sent Eliakim, Shebna, and certain other priests clothed in sackcloth to the prophet Isaiah, with the message, "This is a day of trouble, but it may be the Lord thy God will reprove the servant of the king of Assyria, therefore pray for us." When the priests came to Isaiah, the prophet said, "Be not afraid, saith the Lord, I will send a blast upon him and he shall return to his own land and fall by the sword."

Rabshaker returned to his master who had left his camp at Lachish, and was fighting against Libnah. He sent another message to the king of Judah saying, "Let not thy God in whom you trust, deceive you. Thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done. They have utterly destroyed other countries, and will

you escape? Did the gods deliver the nations whom my fathers destroyed?"

When Hezekiah received the letter at the hand of the courier and read it, he went to the house of the Lord, spread it before Him and offered the prayer, "O Lord God of Israel, who dwelleth between the cherubim, Thou art God alone of all the kingdoms of the earth, and the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Bow down Thine ear and open Thine eyes. Hear the words of Sennacharib who has reproached the Living God. It is true the kings of Assyria have destroyed nations with their gods, the work of men's hands. O Lord our God, I beseech Thee save us out of his hands, that all the kings of the earth may know Thou art the Lord God, even Thou only."

Isaiah sent the following message to Hezekiah, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed for, I have heard." Then the prophet foretold the overthrow of Sennacharib and the safety of the king of Judah and his people. It came to pass that night, the angel of the Lord smote 185,000 men in the camp of the Assyrians and in the morning this vast army lay dead on the field. The king returned to Nineveh, and as he was engaged in the worship of his god Nisroch in his temple, two of his sons killed him with the sword, and then fled to Armenia, and

Esarhadden, another of his sons succeeded him as king.

Hezekiah had passed through many dangers, some of them were imminent, yet his dominions were not secure against his adversary, the Assyrians, and naturally he wished to live until peace and safety were secured for himself and his subjects, yet at this crisis he was prostrated by a mortal disease, it was supposed, and must leave his public affairs unsettled. When lying upon his sick bed, Isaiah came to him with a most solemn and startling message which was, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live." This was sad intelligence for the royal invalid, who, as he lay upon his bed, wept bitterly and turned his face to the wall and offered the following prayer. "I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember me. I have tried to walk before Thee in truth and a perfect heart, and do what was right in Thy sight." Before Isaiah left the court of the palace, he received another communication from the Lord, to return to the king, the captain of My people and say to him, "I have heard thy prayer and seen thy tears. Behold, I will heal thee, and on the third day thou shalt go to the house of the Lord, and I will add fifteen years to thy life and will deliver thee and this city from the king of Assyria for My own and My servant David's sake."

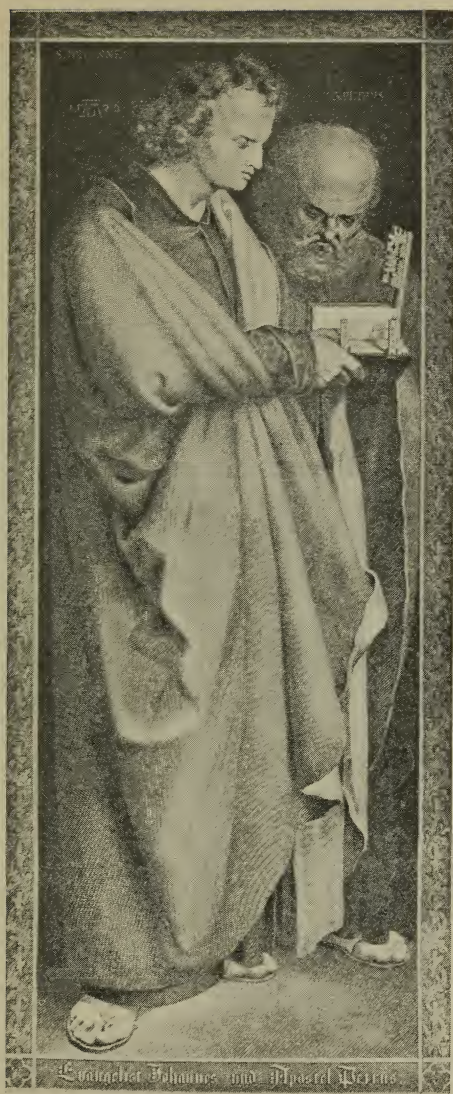
A remedy was to be applied, but Hezekiah doubted its efficiency and required a sign that the prophet's words would come to pass. Isaiah gave him the choice of two signs, namely, that the shadow on the dial of Ahaz would go forwards or backwards ten degrees. Which should it be? Hezekiah replied that it was a common thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees, but for it to return back ten degrees would be a miracle, therefore he chose the latter, and it was granted.

When Berodak-Baladden, king of Babylon, heard of the illness of Hezekiah, he sent letters expressing sympathy, perhaps, and a present to him, and the messengers were entertained by the king who showed them all his treasures, comprising silver, gold, spices, precious ointment and everything in his armory. There was nothing in his palace that he did not let them see, and nothing valuable in his dominions about which he did not inform them. This unusual display of wealth was prompted, doubtless, by pride and vanity, since the prophet reproved him for it. He inquired, "what the messengers said and whence they come." The reply was, "from a distant country, even Babylon." "And what have they seen in thy house?" "Everything, there is nothing among my treasures I have not shown them." "Hear the word of the Lord," said Isaiah. "The days will come when all that is in

thy house, and all thy father's stores, shall be carried to Babylon, and nothing will be left, and thy sons shall be taken captives and appointed servants in the palace of the king of Babylon." Hezekiah replied, "Good is the word of the Lord if peace and truth be in my day."

After the king recovered from his illness, he devoted the fifteen years added to his life, in effecting reforms, and making improvements in his dominions to protect them against the invasions of foreign nations. After consulting his princes and warriors, he repaired the old wall of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, raised it higher, and built another wall about the first, and stopped the fountains of water outside the city so that an enemy could not be supplied with water. He repaired Millo, a place where the people assembled on public occasions, and had a large number of darts and shields made for the soldiers over whom he appointed captains.

Having accomplished these defensive operations, he assembled the citizens at the gate of the city and addressed them saying, "Be strong and courageous. Be not afraid of the king of Assyria nor his large army, for with us is the Lord our God to help and fight our battles;" and the people were much encouraged by his address. Hezekiah was highly honored for the reforms and improvements he accomplished in the kingdom of Judah,



St John and St. Peter.



though laboring under great discouragements and almost insurmountable difficulties, and it is a remarkable instance of his firm religious principles, that he was the son of a wicked king. The sacred writers represent death as a sleep, an intimation that they believed in a future resurrection from the grave. It is said that he slept with his fathers and was buried in the chief sepulchre of the sons of David, while all his subjects paid him great honor.

Manasseh, son and successor of Hezekiah, began his reign at the age of twelve, and continued his government, fifty-five years, the longest period of any of the kings of Judah. Unlike his father, he was an idolater in the early period of his reign, and restored the worship of false gods, rebuilt the High Places his father had broken down, erected altars to Baal and worshipped the heavenly bodies. He erected altars in the house of the Lord for offerings to heathen divinities, and presented his children in the valley of Hinnom as burnt-sacrifices. He used enchantments and witchcraft, dealt with familiar spirits and wizards, placed a carved image in the house of the Lord and corrupted his subjects so they were worse than heathen nations. It is said, "He shed innocent blood until he filled Jerusalem from one end to another."

The Lord admonished Manasseh and his sub-

jects by the prophets, but they would not hearken, therefore, He sent the Assyrians to chastise them, when the prophet delivered in substance the following message: "Because Manasseh has surpassed the Ammonites in wickedness and has caused Judah to sin, therefore, thus saith the Lord, I will bring evil upon Jerusalem and Judah that whoever heareth it, his ears shall tingle, I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipeth a dish, turning it upside down, and I will forsake the remnant of my inheritance and deliver them into the hands of their enemies and they shall become their prey and spoil."

When the kingdom of Judah was invaded by the Assyrians, Manasseh was taken, bound with fetters, and carried off a prisoner. This calamity led him to repent of his wickedness, and when he was released from captivity, he returned to Jerusalem and began to make improvements at the capital. He constructed a stronger wall around the city, and placed officers in all the fortified places of Judah. He removed the false gods and their altars, he had erected and repaired the altar of the Lord, offered sacrifices and commanded the people of Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. However, they continued to offer sacrifices in High Places, though only to the Lord.

The history of Manasseh, it has been said, is

an impressive illustration of Divine mercy and forbearance. After his death, he was buried in the garden of his own house.

The successor of Manasseh to the throne of Judah, was Amon, his son, who was twenty-two when he began to reign, but he continued in power only two years. He followed the example of his father before Manasseh's reformation, and was regarded as one of the wicked kings. His servants formed a conspiracy and slew him in his palace, and his son Josiah was elected king, but the people put to death the conspirators.

It frequently occurred that a righteous and successful sovereign, was the son and successor of a wicked and inefficient one, and vice versa, a fact which suggests the idea that the moral and intellectual faculties are not hereditary. Perhaps with the Hebrew kings, something was due to the training of the royal princes. They were, doubtless, kept secluded from public affairs and trained by teachers of widely different moral and intellectual qualifications, therefore many of the princes were utterly unprepared by any previous training, to assume the reins of government when called to the responsible office.

CHAPTER XI.

JOSIAH, JEHOAHAZ, JEHOIAKIM, JEHOIACHIN OR
JECONIAH, ZEDEKIAH.

JOSIAH, son of Amon, succeeded his father, on the throne of Judah, at the age of eight years, and reigned thirty-one years. He early manifested a respect for the doctrines of the eminent lawgiver of his nation, in opposition to the practices of many of his predecessors. He was chosen king at a very important and critical period in his nation's history, B. C. 640. The kingdom of Israel had been overthrown by the Assyrians, B. C. 727, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had extended his conquests and brought under his authority, a large part of the East. It is not known who acted as regent during the early years of the boy king of Judah, but it may have been Jedidah his mother who probably trained her son in the religion of the patriarchs.

When Josiah was nearly sixteen years of age, he began to arrange his plans for reforms in his dominions, and to adopt measures for the restoration of the worship of Jehovah, and at the age of twenty, he vigorously pursued the accomplish-

ment of his purpose. His first effort was to abolish idolatry in Jerusalem, and then in other parts of his kingdom, by destroying the idols and altars dedicated to the worship of heathen gods. At the age of twenty-six, the restoration of the worship of the Supreme Divinity and the regular services of the temple, were nearly accomplished, and while carrying forward the work, the Book of the Law which had been concealed in the house of God, was discovered. This copy of the Sacred Writings may have been concealed by some priest to save it from destruction during the reign of an idolatrous king.

When informed of the contents of the Book, Josiah determined to follow its directions and observe the festivals commanded by Moses, which had been neglected. He provided means for the repairs of the house of God, and the silver contributed for this purpose was counted by Hilkiah the high priest, and delivered to the overseers of the work, who gave it to the carpenters, masons, and other workmen, to purchase timber and hewn stone for the repair of the temple, though "no account of the amount delivered was kept, because they dealt faithfully," it is said.

A more definite account of the discovery is as follows: While the work of repairs was going forward, the high priest said to Shaphan, the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in

the house of the Lord." The scribe took it to the king and read it, and when Josiah heard what was written, he rent his clothes as a sign of grief and called the high priest with others to inquire of the Lord for himself and his subjects concerning the words of the Book, for said he, "The wrath of the Lord is against us, because our fathers have not done all that is written therein."

Hilkiah and his associates went to Huldah, the prophetess, who dwelt in the college at Jerusalem, and consulted with her. She said the Lord would bring evil upon Jerusalem and the people because they have forsaken Him for other gods, but to the king of Judah say, "Because thy heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before Me, I will gather thee to thy fathers in peace and thou shalt not see the evil I will bring upon this place."

The king, after hearing this message, summoned all the elders, priests, prophets, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the people of other places, both old and young, and read to them the Book of the Covenant found in the house of the Lord. After this instructive exercise, the king stood by one of the pillars of the Temple, and made a solemn covenant before the Lord to keep His commandments with all the heart and soul, and the people stood by the covenant. Josiah

commanded the priests and the porters to bring out of the temple all the vessels for Baal, the emblems of the grove and the heavenly bodies and burn them without the gates of Jerusalem in the field of Kedron, and carry the ashes to Bethel. He removed from office all the priests who had offered incense to Baal, the sun, moon, and planets, and brought the grove as a sacred emblem from the house of the Lord, burned it and cast the ashes upon the graves of the dead. He overthrew the houses of the Sodomites where the women made hangings for the grove, and defiled the High Places where the priests had burned incense to false gods, and also degraded Tophet in the valley of Hinnom, where parents offered their children a burnt-sacrifice to the god Moloch. He removed the temples consecrated to the sun, destroyed the altars and many other relics of idolatry. The altar at Bethel, erected by Jeroboam for the worship of the golden calves, was destroyed, and when Josiah saw the sepulchres in the mount, he removed the bones of the dead and burned them, as had been predicted by one of the prophets. "What is that I see?" inquired the king. "It is the sepulchre of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed what thou hast done against the altar at Bethel," was the answer. "Let it remain," said Josiah; therefore they did not molest his remains.

The reforms of Josiah were more thorough than those of any of his predecessors, but his zeal led him to do some things that seemed cruel ; for instance, he slew all the priests in Samaria who had offered sacrifices in " High Places," but it may have been necessary to protect the people of Judah against idolatry. Josiah had superintended his reforms in person, and had visited different parts of his kingdom, but after he had accomplished his work, he returned to Jerusalem.

Frequent wars occurred between the Egyptians and the Assyrians, before the conquest of the latter power, and in one instance the conflict lasted more than twenty years, when Egypt was invaded and her cities laid waste, but she finally regained her liberty, when Assyria was engaged in a war with Babylon and Elam. Pharaoh Necho II., king of Egypt, with a powerful army began an expedition in quest of adventure, B. c. 608, and marched through Palestine, the common highway for armies in their warlike excursions between the Nile and the great rivers of Asia. He encountered no opposition until he reached the plain of Esdraelon, one of the famous battle-fields of the world, when he was unexpectedly opposed by the forces of Josiah.

Necho II. sent ambassadors to him with the message, " What have I to do with thee, king of Judah ? I am not against thee, but the people

with whom I am at war, according to the command of God. Forbear meddling with Him, that He may not destroy thee." Josiah did not regard the admonition of the king of Egypt; but fought against him in the second battle of Megiddo on the plain of Esdraelon, and was mortally wounded by the archers, when he told his servants to remove him from the battlefield. They took him from his chariot, and placing him in another, brought him to Jerusalem, where, after his death, he was buried in the sepulchre of his fathers, and all his subjects throughout Judea mourned for him. Songs and elegies were composed in reference to his death, which were used for a long time after.

Why Josiah should attack the army of the Egyptians that had given him no cause for such an act, is not apparent, but it was a fatal mistake for himself and a serious one for his subjects, since his kingdom was made tributary to the conquerors. Josiah died but a short period before the conquest of the kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians and the captivity of the people for seventy years, beginning B. C. 588 or 586, about one hundred and thirty-six years after that of the ten tribes of Israel, their relatives and neighbors, by the Assyrians. Josiah was succeeded at the early age of thirty-nine years by his son Jehoahaz.

Jehoahaz, son and successor of Josiah, reigned only three months, and was then twenty-three years of age. He was inclined to follow the example of the unrighteous kings who preceded him. Necho, king of Egypt, invaded the kingdom of Judah, laid it under tribute, took Jehoahaz a prisoner, appointed Eliakim his brother king and changed his name, to Jehoiakim. He was twenty-five when he began to reign, and continued his rule eleven years, but he did not follow the example of his father, Josiah. During his reign, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, invaded the kingdom of Judah, took the king prisoner, bound him with fetters and carried him to Babylon, together with the sacred vessels of the house of the Lord, which he placed in his temple at his capital.

When Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Judah, the king became tributary, but after three years Jehoiakim rebelled. This involved him in trouble, of course, and brought upon himself and nation great dangers. Besides the perils from the Chaldeans, he was threatened by the Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites. These disasters were sent to the people of Judah, it is said as a punishment for the sins of Manasseh. After the death of Jehoiakim, he was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin or Jeconiah at the age of eighteen, who reigned only three months and ten days.

During his brief reign, Nebuchadnezzar came again to Jerusalem, besieged it, and took Jehoiachin, his mother and servants, princes and officers, prisoners, with all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the king's house, cut in pieces all the vessels of gold Solomon had placed in the Temple and carried them to Babylon, together with the craftsmen and smiths, and 10,000 captives, leaving none but the poorer classes. The king of Babylon appointed Mattaniah king of the remnant left in Judea, and changed his name to Zedekiah who was then twenty-one years of age. He occupied the throne eleven years, but he very imprudently rebelled against the king of Babylon, which brought him to Jerusalem to which he laid siege, and in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign it was captured. When the king of Judah was aware of his peril, he fled from the city by night, but the Chaldeans pursued and overtook him on the plain of Jericho, all his soldiers or guard having deserted him. The Babylonians brought him to Riblah, the headquarters of the king of Babylon, when a fearful judgment was passed upon him. He was compelled to witness the death of his sons by the hand of his captors, after which they put out his eyes, bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him a prisoner to Babylon. The captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard burned the house of the Lord at

Jerusalem, and the dwellings of the leading men, threw down the walls of Jerusalem, broke in pieces the pillars of brass and the brazen sea and carried off the pieces together with the sacred vessels, and everything which could be removed. He then took the priests, the porter of the house of the Lord, five of the king's guards, the principal scribe who marshalled the people, and sixty other persons and conducted them to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where they were all slain, and the king and people of Judah that survived, were made captives.

There was a change in the government of Babylon during the thirtieth year of the captivity when the new sovereign, Evil-merodach, released Jehoiachin from prison, spoke kindly to him, changed his prison garments, set him on a throne above other captive princes, and gave him a daily allowance of food for the remainder of his days.—The Jews remained in captivity seventy years, and at the close of this period when the Persians had overthrown the Babylonian empire, they were allowed to return to their native land, as many of them as chose to do so, and rebuild Jerusalem their capital city, which remained in their possession until the Roman conquest in the early period of the present era.

The period occupied by the kingdom of Judah, after the secession, was four hundred and four

and one-half years, during which there were twenty sovereigns including Athaliah the queen and an interregnum of eleven years.—The names of several kings of Judah and those of the kings of Israel were the same, a circumstance liable to cause some perplexity, but the list of kings for each nation, and the length of their reigns will relieve the difficulty.

The Sovereigns of Judah.

1.	Rehoboam,	-	-	Reigned 17 years.
2.	Abijah or Abijam,	-	-	" 3 "
3.	Asa,	-	-	" 41 "
4.	Jehoshaphat,	-	-	" 25 "
5.	Joram or Jehoram,	-	-	" 8 "
6.	Ahaziah or Azariah,	-	-	" 1 "
7.	Athaliah, Queen,	-	-	" 6 "
8.	Joash or Jehoash,	-	-	" 40 "
9.	Amaziah,	-	-	" 29 "
	INTERREGNUM,	-	-	11 "
10.	Uzziah or Azariah,	-	-	" 52 "
11.	Jotham,	-	-	" 16 "
12.	Ahaz,	-	-	" 16 "
13.	Hezekiah,	-	-	" 29 "
14.	Manasseh,	-	-	" 55 "
15.	Amon,	-	-	" 2 "
16.	Josiah,	-	-	" 31 "
17.	Jehoahaz,	-	-	" 3 months.
18.	Jehoiakim,	-	-	" 11 years.
19.	Jehoiachin or Jeconiah,	-	-	" 3 mo. and 10 dys.
20.	Zedekiah,	-	-	" 11 years.

THE CAPTIVITY.

The Prophets of Judah after the Secession.

1. Shemaiah, during the reign of Rehoboam and Abijah.
2. Oded, during the reign of Asa.
3. Azariah, during the reign of Asa.
4. Hanani, during the reign of Asa.
5. Jehu, son of Hanani, during the reign of Asa.
6. Eliezer, during the reign of Jehoshaphat.
7. Jahaziel, during the reign of Joram or Jehoram.
8. Zechariah I., during the reign of Amaziah.
9. Zechariah II., during the reign of Uzziah or Azariah.
10. Isaiah, during the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah.
11. Micah, during the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah.
12. Nahum, during the reign of Hezekiah (supposed).
13. Joel, during the reign of Manasseh, Amon (supposed).
14. Jeremiah, during the reign of Josiah.
15. Habakkuk, during the reign of Jehoahaz (supposed).
16. Zephaniah, during the reign of Jehoiakim.
17. Ezekiel, during the captivity of Jehoiakim.
18. Daniel, during the reign of Zedekiah.
19. Obadiah, during the reign of Zedekiah (supposed).
20. Haggai, after the captivity.
21. Zechariah III., after the captivity.
22. Nehemiah, after the captivity.

The Kings of Israel.

CHAPTER XII.

JEROBOAM I., NADAB, BAASHA, ELAH, ZIMRI,
OMRI.

THE history of the remarkable man who founded the Kingdom of Israel and became its first sovereign, after the secession, is interesting, eventful and romantic, but sad, since he has the reputation of being the one who "made Israel sin," by instituting the worship of the "golden calves," at Dan and Bethel.

Jeroboam, son of Nebat, was a native of Zereda, a place belonging to the tribe of Ephraim. He was bold and shrewd, enterprising, and unscrupulous, and on account of his qualities, he won the attention of King Solomon, who considered the young man a suitable person to levy certain taxes on the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, therefore he was appointed ruler over these descendants of Joseph. While on his way from Jerusalem to attend to his duties, dressed

in a new garment or mantle, he was met by the prophet Ahijah, and when the two men were alone in the field, the man of God caught hold of the mantle of Jeroboam and rent it into twelve pieces, then said to him, "Take ten pieces, for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'I will rend the kingdom from Solomon and give ten tribes to thee, because he has forsaken me and has worshipped the gods of the Zidonians, Moabites, and Ammonites, and has not kept my laws, as David kept them. However, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hands, but will make him prince during his life, for David's sake. I will give thee ten tribes and thou shalt reign king over Israel. If thou wilt keep my commandments, I will be with thee and establish thee in thy kingdom.'"

When Solomon was informed of the message of Ahijah, he attempted to take the life of Jeroboam, but being aware of his danger, he escaped to Egypt, where he remained until the death of his enemy, and when he heard that Rehoboam had succeeded his father in the government, Jeroboam returned to Palestine, and with a number of the leading men he appeared at court and offered a petition for the relief of some of their burdens, but the king, very injudiciously, not only refused to lessen their burdens, but declared that he would increase them. This caused ten

tribes to revolt and elect Jeroboam for their king, but he soon forgot or set aside the obligation he owed the Lord who gave him the kingdom, and thought only of advancing his own interests.

It was important in order to secure their allegiance, to prevent his subjects from going to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices and observe the annual festivals, for were they allowed to do so, they would be inclined, perhaps, to return to the house of David. To prevent this, the shrewd politician caused two golden calves to be made and placed, one in Dan and the other in Bethel, the extreme limits of his dominions, and issued a proclamation to be circulated throughout his kingdom, that none of his subjects should go to Jerusalem to worship, and directing their attention to the calves he said, "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee out of Egypt."

Jeroboam erected temples and ordained priests from the lowest classes, not of the tribe of Levi, according to the law, and appointed priests for the High Places, where idols were worshipped. He instituted festivals similar to those required by the Mosaic law, and offered sacrifices upon altars dedicated to his gods. As Jeroboam stood by the altar at Bethel to burn incense, on a certain occasion, a man of God who came from Judah exclaimed, "O altar! altar! thus saith the

Lord, 'Behold a child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, who shall offer priests and burn men's bones upon the altar, and as a sign that he'"—the man of God—"“was proclaiming the will of the Lord, the altar shall be rent and the ashes shall be scattered.’”

When Jeroboam heard the words of the prophet, he attempted to seize him, but as he extended his hand, it became paralyzed and the altar was rent as the man of God had predicted. Jeroboam said, "Entreat the Lord thy God that my hand may be restored." The prophet offered a prayer as requested, when his hand was restored to its use. "Come home with me and dine, and I will give thee a reward," said Jeroboam. The prophet replied, "If thou wilt give me half of thy house, I will not go with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place, for so it was charged me by the word of the Lord;" therefore he departed by another road and returned not by Bethel.

There lived in this town an aged prophet, and his sons came and told him what the man of God had done, and the words he spake to Jeroboam, when their father inquired which way he went, and ordered them to saddle the ass, when he rode to seek the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak tree. He inquired, "Art thou the man of God who came from Judah?" He said,

"I am." "Come home with me and eat bread."
"I cannot return," he replied, "for I was told by the word of the Lord not to eat or drink here, nor return by the way I came."

The aged man said, "I am a prophet, and an angel told me to bring the messenger from Judah back to my house that he may eat and drink." This old prophet uttered a falsehood, and the man being deceived, returned with him. As they sat at the table, the host said to his guest, "As thou hast disobeyed the Lord, thy body shall not be buried in the sepulchre of thy fathers." After they had finished their meal, the old prophet saddled the ass of his visitor, when he departed, but as he was on his way, a lion met and killed him, but left his body with that of the ass in the road, and stood by them. Those passing by and seeing the dead man went to the city and related the incident, when the aged prophet, who was the cause of the disaster, said, "It was the man who was disobedient to the word of the Lord, therefore he was slain by the lion." He said to his sons, "Saddle for me the ass," when he went and found the remains of the man from Judah and the lion standing by them. He took up the dead man, placed him upon an ass, and bringing him to the city, laid him in his own tomb and mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother." He then told his

sons to bury him after his death, beside his remains. "The prophecy concerning the altar at Bethel and the High Places in the cities of Samaria, shall certainly come to pass."

Abijah, Jeroboam's son, was sick, and the father told his wife to disguise herself that it might not be known who she was, and go to Shiloh and seek for Ahijah the prophet, who had informed him that he should be king of Israel, and inquire about the result of the illness of his child. "Take ten loaves and cracknels (or biscuit), and a cruse of honey, and he will tell thee what will happen to our son."

Jeroboam's wife followed his directions and came to the house of Ahijah, at Shiloh. On account of his advanced age, the prophet had lost his sight, but the Lord said to him, "The wife of Jeroboam cometh to thee about her son who is sick, but she will pretend to be another woman."

When Ahijah heard her footsteps, he said, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? I have for thee heavy tidings. Go tell Jeroboam thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'Though I have exalted thee a prince over my people Israel, and have rent the kingdom from the house of David, and have given it to thee, yet thou hast not been as my servant David who kept my commandments with

all his heart, but thou hast done evil above all that were before thee, and hast gone after other gods, therefore, I will utterly destroy the house of Jeroboam. Go to thy home, and when you enter the city, the child will die, and he only shall come in peace to the grave of his family. The Lord shall smite Israel and scatter them beyond the River (Euphrates) because of the sins of Jeroboam, who led Israel astray.'” Jeroboam’s wife returned to Tirzah, where her husband awaited her, and as soon as she came to the door of his house, the child died.

Jeroboam did not reform his life, and after a reign of twenty-two years, he died and was succeeded by his son Nadab, as king of Israel.

There is no one of the kings of Israel, perhaps, who is so responsible for the degeneracy of his nation as Jeroboam. He established idolatry and heathen practices in his kingdom, not from conscientious motives, but from selfishness. He is frequently charged with the fearful crime of causing Israel to sin, referring to their religious practices.

The second king of Israel was Nadab, son of Jeroboam, whose reign continued only two years, but he followed the heathen practices of his father. Few public events during his reign are recorded, and his death was tragical. There was a war between the Israelites and the Philistines,

their near neighbors, and Nadab laid siege to Gibbethon, one of their cities. While besieging this city, the king of Israel was assassinated by Baasha, son of Ahijah, of the tribe of Issacher.

After the murder of Nadab, Baasha seized the government of Israel and smote all the family of Jeroboam, not sparing a single member, according to the word of the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite.

During Baasha's reign, which continued twenty-four years, there was a war between him and Asa, king of Judah. To prevent any of his subjects from deserting to the king of Judah, the king of Israel built Ramah as a fortified town, and probably placed a garrison there to hold it. Ramah or Rama was the name of several cities in Palestine. There was one about thirty miles northwest of Jerusalem, on the road to Joppa, and was probably the one mentioned in this narrative.

Baasha formed an alliance with Ben-hadad, king of Syria, and made Tirzah, a city of Ephraim, his capital and the royal seat of the kings of Israel, from the time of Jeroboam to that of Omri, who built Samaria for the capital of the kingdom of Israel.

As Baasha was disposed to follow the example of Jeroboam, Jehu, the son of Hanani, delivered a prophecy against him, as follows: "Though I exalted thee from the dust, and made thee prince

over my people Israel, yet thou has walked in the way of Jeroboam, therefore I will remove thee and thy posterity, and make thy house like that of Jeroboam, and him that dieth of the family of Baasha in the city, shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the fields, shall the fowls of the air eat."

A brief summary of the reign of this king is as follows: He was the commander of the armies of King Nadab, whom he treacherously murdered at the siege of Gibbethon, and assumed the government of Israel, which he ruled twenty-four years, and during that time, formed a league with the king of Syria, and carried on a war with the king of Judah, and put to death all the family of Jeroboam. He, however, followed the wicked example of his predecessors, but unlike many of them, was saved from a violent death.

Elah, son of Baasha, succeeded his father and reigned two years with his capital at Tirzah. As he was indulging in a drunken revel, in the house of Arza, his steward, Zimri, a captain of his chariots, entered the banquet hall, slew the king and seized the government. As soon as he had accomplished his purpose, he destroyed all the family of Baasha as the prophet Jehu had predicted. He reigned only seven days, the shortest reign of any of the kings of Israel.

When the people of Israel at the siege of Gib-

bethon heard that Zimri had slain Elah, they elected Omri captain of the army, in the camp, when he, with his followers, left Gibbethon and laid siege to Tirzah. As soon as Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the royal palace and set fire to it, burning the house and himself with it. Thus ended the life of the traitor and murderer, after exercising royal authority only seven days.

There was a division, however, among the tribes of Israel in regard to the succession, a part choosing Tibni, son of Ginath, for king, and a part preferred Omri. The controversy might have led to a civil war, had not Tibni died. His decease left the kingdom to Omri, who has the reputation of doing worse than any of his predecessors. He reigned twelve years and during that time he made some important changes. Tirzah was his capital for the first six years of his reign, but at the end of that period, he purchased the hill of Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built a city on the hill which he named Samaria after the original owner, and made it his capital, when it became the metropolis of the Israelites until their captivity and dispersion. After his death, Omri was buried in Samaria, and was succeeded by Ahab, his son.



Conversion of Paul.



CHAPTER XIII.

AHAB.

ONE of the most prominent sovereigns of Israel, was Ahab, son of Omri, who is represented as exceeding in wickedness all those who reigned before him. His reign of twenty-two years was memorable for some events connected with the history of the prophet Elijah. Some of the charges against Ahab as recorded by the sacred writers are, that he married Jezebel, a shrewd but wicked heathen princess, a daughter of the king of the Zidonians. She exercised a powerful influence over the king of Israel who led him to worship Baal, to whom he built a temple, erected an altar, and planted a grove for the worship of false gods.

During the reign of Ahab, three different wars occurred between the Syrians and the Israelites. Ben-hadad, king of Syria, on a certain occasion, with a powerful army of cavalry and chariots, accompanied by thirty-two confederate kings with their forces, invaded the kingdom of Israel, and besieged Samaria. He first sent a threatening and insulting message to Ahab with a menace

of great destruction unless he submitted to his terms, when the king of Israel uttered the proverb often quoted, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself, as he that putteth it off."

When Ben-hadad heard this message, he said to his confederates, "Set yourselves in array against the city," meaning Samaria. His purpose was to take it by storm.

At this aspect of affairs, the king of Israel was doubtful about the result of the siege, when a prophet came to him with the encouraging message that the Israelites would conquer, and that the Lord was their Deliverer. Ahab inquired by whom the victory would be won. The answer was, "By the princes of the provinces." "And who shall command the troops?" The reply was, "Thou." The king mustered the princes and found they numbered 230, while the soldiers, capable of bearing arms, included 7,000, a very small force to meet so formidable a host as the Syrians.

When Ben-hadad was indulging in a drunken feast with the thirty-two confederate kings, in their tents or pavilions, he was told the Israelites were coming. He said, "Whether they come for peace or war, take them alive." The soldiers of Ahab made an attack upon the Syrians, killing great numbers, while the remainder fled, pursued

by the conquerors, and the king escaped on horseback accompanied by his cavalry. Ben-hadad, though defeated, did not relinquish his purpose of subduing the Israelites, therefore a prophet came to Ahab saying, "Strengthen thyself and see what thou doest, for the king of Syria will make another attack." The subjects of the Syrian monarch said to him, "The gods of the Israelites are gods of the hills, therefore are stronger than we are. Let us fight them in the plain, and surely we shall win the victory. Remove the kings from the army and place captains in their positions. Go immediately and raise an army like the one lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot, then we shall conquer." The king approved their plan and at the beginning of the year, marched to Aphek to fight the Israelites. The latter compared to the enemy were like "two little flocks of kids," as it is expressed, while the Syrians, on account of their numbers, occupied the entire region in the vicinity of Aphek.

A prophet came to the king of Israel, with the message "Thus saith the Lord, 'Because the Syrians said, "The Lord is God of the hills and not of the valleys, I will deliver this great multitude into thy hands."'" The contending forces encamped opposite each other several days, both, apparently, reluctant to begin the conflict, but

on the seventh day the battle began, when the Syrians were defeated, losing 100,000 infantry and the remainder fled to Aphek, when the walls of the city fell upon the fighters killing 27,000, making the entire loss 127,000. Ben-hadad fled and concealed himself in a chamber when his scouts, or perhaps, bodyguard said to him, "The kings of Israel are merciful. Let us put on sackcloth and with ropes on our heads, go to Ahab, perhaps he will save our lives." This advice was followed.

When the king of Israel heard that Ben-hadad was alive, he said, "He is my brother; conduct him to me," when Ahab invited him to a seat in his chariot. The captive said to his conqueror, "The cities my father took from thy father, I will restore, and thou shalt occupy streets in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Ahab released his prisoner and made a covenant with him and sent him to his own country.

A prophet in disguise waited for Ahab, and as he passed by said to the king, "When thy servant was in the army, one was brought to him as a prisoner, and I was told to keep him safe for if he is missing, thy life shall be given for his, or thou shalt pay a talent of silver" (perhaps between \$1,000 and \$2,000). "When thy servant was busy, here and there, the prisoner escaped." The king said, "So shall thy judg-

ment be. Thou hast decided it." When the messenger had removed his disguise, Ahab recognized him as a prophet and expected to hear some prediction, which was, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Because thou hast let this man'" (Ben-hadad) "'go who was appointed to be destroyed, thy life shall be given for his, and thy people for his people.'" Ahab went to his palace sad and displeased and soon came to Samaria, the capital of his dominions.

Naboth, an inhabitant of the city of Jezreel, owned a vineyard near the king's palace, and Ahab thought it would be a desirable place for a garden, therefore he would like to own it. He made an offer to the owner for it which was to give him another and better vineyard, or if he preferred, to pay him in money. Naboth said, "The Lord forbid that I should sell the inheritance of my fathers." The king was greatly disappointed and offended at the reply of the owner, and going to his palace, he lay down upon his bed with his face to the wall, indicating a troubled mind, and refused to take any food. His conduct was that of an indulged and disappointed child.

While he was bemoaning his fortune, Jezebel, his wife, came to him and inquired the cause of his sadness, when he related the circumstances about the vineyard. She replied, "Do you gov-

ern the kingdom of Israel? Arise and take your food. I will manage to get the vineyard for you."

This crafty and unscrupulous woman accomplished her purpose in the following manner. She wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with the royal seal, then sent them to the elders and nobles in Naboth's city, that is Jezreel, directing them to proclaim a fast and bring Naboth before the people with two "sons of Belial" for witnesses to testify (falsely, of course) that the prisoner had blasphemed God and the king, and then conduct him outside the city and stone him.

After the queen's orders had been complied with, she was informed of the fact, when she told Ahab and urged him to take immediate possession of the vineyard, which was done.

Elijah received a Divine command to go and meet Ahab who was in the vineyard of Naboth investigating its value for the purpose of a garden, doubtless pleased with the possession which cost him nothing. The prophet's message was as follows: "Hast thou killed and taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood.'" Ahab said to Elijah, "Hast thou found me, O my enemy?" He answered, "I have found thee. Thou hast sold thyself to do evil in the sight of the Lord." He

then predicted the utter destruction of all his posterity. The prophet declared that, "The dogs should eat the flesh of Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel, and that the dogs and fowls would eat all belonging to her family. When Ahab heard these words, he rent his clothes and dressed himself in sackcloth and fasted, when the word of the Lord came to Elijah, that because the king humbled himself, these fearful punishments would be deferred until his son's day.

After three years, another war occurred between Syria and Israel, when Ahab invited Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in the contest. He consented, but proposed that Ahab should inquire of the prophets about the expediency of the war. The king of Israel called together four hundred prophets, of Baal perhaps, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead," (a place the Syrians had captured), "to battle or not?" They replied, "Go, for the Lord will deliver it into thy hands." The king of Judah inquired, "Is there not a prophet of the Lord of whom we may inquire?" Ahab said, "There was one, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, but I hate him, for he prophesies nothing but evil of me." Jehoshaphat replied, "Let not the king say so."

One of the advisers of Ahab named Zedekiah, had made iron horns, saying, "Thus saith the

Lord, 'With these thou shalt push the Syrians until they are destroyed,' " and all the other prophets and the messengers of the king assented to his prediction. Ahab called an officer and gave orders to bring Micaiah in haste. The kings of Israel and Judah dressed in their royal robes, sat each upon his throne when the prophet was conducted into their presence. Ahab inquired, "Shall we go against Ramoth-Gilead?" He replied, "Go and prosper for the Lord will deliver it into thy hands." Ahab doubtless considered this as irony, for he said, "How many times shall I adjure thee to tell me nothing but the truth?" The prophet then said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep without a shepherd. The Lord said these have no masters. Let every man return to his home in peace." Ahab said to the king of Judah, "Did I not tell thee he would prophesy no good concerning me but only evil?" Then Micaiah said, "I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host standing on His right hand and on His left, when He said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go to Ramoth-Gilead that he may fall?' One said this thing and another that, when at length there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, saying, 'I will persuade him.' The Lord said, 'wherewith?' He answered, 'I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets.' 'Go forth and do so,'

was the command. Now, therefore, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets." When Micaiah had expressed himself in this manner, Zedekiah smote him on the cheek, saying, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak to thee?" The prophet replied, "Thou shalt see in the day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself." Ahab said, "Take Micaiah to Amon, the governor of the city, and Joash, the king's son, and say to them the king commands you to put him in prison and give him only bread and water until I return in peace." The prophet said, "If you return in peace, the Lord has not spoken by me. Listen, O people, every one of you."

The prophet's warning was not heeded, and the two kings with their armies began their march to Ramoth-Gilead, a celebrated city in the kingdom of Israel east of the Jordan, situated among the mountains of Gilead, hence the name. Ahab proposed the following plan of attack. He would disguise himself, that is lay aside his royal attire and appear as a private soldier, while the king of Judah was to dress in robes such as kings wore. The artful policy of Ahab is apparent. He was aware the Syrian king considered him his chief enemy and would direct his followers to conquer and if possible kill him. This arrangement was carried out and when the king of Syria

gave orders to the thirty-two captains commanding his chariots, he told them to fight with no one but the king of Israel and his followers. He probably knew about the alliance between the kings of Israel and Judah.

After the battle began, the Syrian soldiers, seeing Jehoshaphat in his royal attire, supposed he was the king of Israel, therefore they vigorously attacked his forces when, seeing he was in danger of being defeated, he shouted to his assailants, that he was not the king of Israel. The Syrians then gave up the pursuit of the king of Judah, but the battle went on, when a certain man, it is not known whether he was a Syrian or an Israelite, fired an arrow at a venture, or without any particular aim, and smote Ahab who was seated in his chariot, between his lower armor and breastplate, when he ordered the driver to carry him out of the army, for he was wounded, though he was supported in his chariot until the close of the day, when he died. The blood from his wound had flowed into the chariot, and when it was washed in the pool of Samaria, the dogs came and lapped the blood, according to the prediction of the prophet. He was buried in Samaria, and was succeeded by his son.

Though Ahab was an idolater and committed many fearful crimes, yet he did much for the improvement of his kingdom in founding cities

and some architectural works, as the construction of an ivory palace.

Jezebel survived her husband a few years, but finally met with a tragical death.—(See Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.)

CHAPTER XIV.

AHAZIAH, JORAM OR JEHORAM, JEHU.

AHAZIAH, the son and successor of Ahab, reigned two years, and followed the example of his parents in his religious practices. His early death was caused by an accident. He fell down through a lattice or open window, from an upper chamber, and was severely injured, when he sent messengers to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, whether he would recover from the accident. Elijah was sent by the angel of the Lord to meet the messengers of the king and say to them, "Is it because there is not a God in Israel that ye go to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron? Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, 'Thou shalt not leave thy bed, but shalt surely die.'" The messengers returned and related the words of the prophet, when the king inquired what kind of a man he was. They described him, when Ahaziah said it was Elijah the Tishbite. An account of the fruitless attempts to arrest the prophet is related in a sketch of his life. Ahaziah died according to the word of the Lord and was succeeded by his brother Joram or Jehoram, whose

reign continued twelve years. Though his government was not faultless, yet he did not entirely follow the evil conduct of his parents, Ahab and Jezebel, since he removed the image of Baal his father had made.

Joram became engaged in a war with the Moabites, who had been made tributary to the Israelites, but on the accession of a new king they revolted and refused to pay the tribute formerly given. The king of Israel sent to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to inquire whether he would join in a war with Moab. He said he would, therefore the sovereigns of Israel and Judah, with the king of Edom, who joined the confederacy, began their expedition, but in the region through which they passed, there was no water for their troops, and they were in great distress. It was in this emergency that Elisha the prophet was consulted, who predicted that there would be a supply of water. The Moabites being deceived, were overcome by the allied armies of Israel, Judah, and Edom.

After this incident, the king of Syria went with an army to Samaria and besieged the capital city. When the people of the city had consumed all their food, they were in imminent danger of dying by famine. This caused great distress and was the occasion of fearful scenes, such as that of a mother killing and eating her own son. When

King Joram heard of the revolting incident, he rent his clothes and put on sackcloth as a sign of great distress. Supposing that Elisha was the cause of all the trouble, he sent an officer to slay him, but the prophet was informed of the king's intention by Divine revelation, and guarded his door against the officer. He predicted that on the morrow there would be plenty of food in Samaria, but the Lord, on whose hand the king leaned, sneered at the prediction, when the prophet gave him warning of the fatal accident that happened to him which came to pass as foretold. A more particular account is given in the history of Elisha.

In a war with Hazael, king of Syria, Joram was wounded in a battle at Ramah, when he was taken to Jezreel to be cured of his wounds. While at this place, Ahaziah, king of Judah, made him a visit to offer his sympathy to the wounded king. At this crisis, Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to Ramoth-Gilead, to anoint Jehu, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Israel. After this ceremony, Jehu went to Jezreel, where Joram and Ahaziah were, and caused both of these kings to be slain.

When King Joram heard that Jehu was coming, he, with Ahaziah, king of Judah, went to meet him and inquired, "Is it peace, Jehu?" His answer was, "What peace, so long as thy

mother, Jezebel, ruleth?" Joram said to Ahaziah, "There is treachery," when Jehu drew his bow and shot the king of Israel, and then slew the king of Judah. These two sovereigns having been disposed of, the conspirator ascended the throne of Israel.

Jehu, it is affirmed, was chosen by Divine appointment to punish the family of Ahab for their transgressions, yet he appears to have been actuated by hatred and a selfish ambition more than a sincere regard for the worship of Jehovah. Four of his descendants occupied the throne of Israel, namely, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II. and Zachariah. Between the two last sovereigns there was an interregnum of twenty-two years. Who managed state affairs, or what was the condition of the country during this period, can only be conjectured. The government may have been administrated by the high priest and his subordinates.

Jehoahaz, son and successor of Jehu, reigned seventeen years, and followed the example of Jeroboam I. who introduced heathen practices. During the reign of Jehoahaz there was a war with the Syrians, the powerful enemy of the Israelites, who had been subdued by their northern neighbor, and their military strength was greatly reduced, so that only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen remained of their

available force. The king of Israel in his distress besought the Lord for assistance, and was heard. He had compassion on Israel, it is said, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Joash or *Jehoash*, son of *Jehoahaz*, reigned sixteen years. He recovered the cities the Syrians had captured from Israel, and was victorious in three different battles with this nation. He received a challenge from *Amaziah*, king of Judah, to engage in a conflict with him, when the king of Israel delivered the parable about the thistle and the oak intended to teach the challenger his folly in seeking a war with Israel. The parable was as follows: "The thistle of Lebanon sent to the cedar saying, 'Give thy daughter to my son for a wife,' when there passed by a wild beast and trod down the thistle. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom and thy heart hath lifted thee up. Glory not in this, and tarry at home for why shouldest thou fall and Judah with thee?"

Amaziah would not abandon his purpose, and began a war, when at the battle of Beth-Shemesh, he was defeated and his soldiers fled in a panic to their tents. *Joash* took the king of Judah a prisoner, marched to Jerusalem, broke down a part of the wall of the city, took all the gold, silver, and sacred vessels of the House of the

Lord and the treasures of the king's house and returned to Samaria.

Jeroboam II., son of Joash reigned forty-one years and adopted the policy of his namesake in regard to religious worship, but he was, however, an energetic and patriotic ruler who, by his success in war recovered the lost possessions of the Israelites, from Hamoth to the sea, and their claims in Damascus. After a long reign, he was succeeded by his son *Zachariah*, the last of the family of Jehu. Between the reigns of the two last members of the family of Jehu, the interregnum, as previously noticed, occurred, and according to the history of nations under such conditions, it is possible there were rivalries, seditions, and other lawless transactions, and it is remarkable there is no record of a civil war. Zachariah reigned only six months, but during that short period, he pursued the evil ways of some of his predecessors, and was assassinated by Shallum, son of Jabesh, who usurped the royal power.

Shallum, the assassin of Zachariah, who seized the reins of government, held them only one month when he was murdered by *Menahem*, son of Gadi who went from Tirzah to Samaria for this purpose that he might become the king of Israel. He continued his government ten years and proved to be a fearfully cruel despot, some

of whose deeds are too revolting to be recorded, especially his treatment of women. He captured several cities and killed the inhabitants because they did not acknowledge his right to govern them. The kingdom of Israel was, during his reign, threatened by an invasion of the Assyrians, but Menahem gave the king of Assyria one thousand talents of silver which he exacted from the wealthy men in his kingdom, each one giving fifty shekels. This tribute induced the king of Assyria to return to his own country without a war. Menahem, in his religion, followed heathen practices and after his death was succeeded by his son *Pekahiah* who reigned two years, and adopted the practices of Jeroboam I., son of Nebat. A conspiracy was formed by *Pekah* son of Remaliah who went to the royal palace at Samaria with more than fifty men associated with him in the plot, and assassinated the king, and assumed the government. During the twenty years of *Pekah's* reign, Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, invaded the kingdom of Israel, captured a large number of cities, and led the inhabitants captive to Assyria.

Hoshea, son of Elah, formed a conspiracy, slew Pekah and reigned over Israel nine years. Shalmeneser, king of Assyria, invaded the kingdom of Israel, when Hoshea was brought under his authority and gave him presents, but the king of

Israel formed an alliance with the king of Egypt and withheld his presents from the Assyrian king who, in consequence, came to Samaria with an army and laid siege to the city and, after three years, captured it, and deported the inhabitants to Assyria, and thus ended the kingdom founded by Jeroboam, son of Nebat, after an existence of less than three hundred years, or according to some chronologists, two hundred and seventy-one years. The ten captive tribes of Israel never returned to their native land as a nation, and many speculations have been cherished in regard to them, as, "Will they ever return to Palestine? Have they lost their identity as a distinct race and become a component factor of the different nations among whom they dwell?"

The history of the Israelites after the secession is, in some respects, peculiar. During the short period of their existence, they had nineteen kings, some of whose reigns were very brief, and all of them are charged with the offence of idolatry to a greater or less extent. Some of these sovereigns were assassinated by those ambitious to occupy their places.

The prophets of Israel were Ahijah, Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha, Jonah, Hosea, Amos, Oded, and the Man from Judah, whose name is not mentioned.

The Kings of Israel, After the Secession.

1.	Jeroboam I.,	-	-	-	Reigned 22 years.
2.	Nadab,	-	-	-	" 2 "
3.	Baasha,	-	-	-	" 24 "
4.	Elah,	-	-	-	" 2 "
5.	Zimri,	-	-	-	" 7 days.
6.	Omri,	-	-	-	" 12 years.
7.	Ahab,	-	-	-	" 22 "
8.	Ahaziah,	-	-	-	" 2 "
9.	Joram or Jehoram,	-	-	-	" 12 "
10.	Jehu,	-	-	-	" 28 "
11.	Jehoahaz,	-	-	-	" 17 "
12.	Joash or Jehoash,	-	-	-	" 16 "
13.	Jeroboam II.,	-	-	-	" 41 "
	INTERREGNUM,	-	-	-	22 "
14.	Zachariah	-	-	-	" 6 months.
15.	Shallum,	-	-	-	" 1 month.
16.	Menahem,	-	-	-	" 10 years.
17.	Pekahiah,	-	-	-	" 2 "
18.	Pekah	-	-	-	" 20 "
	ANARCHY,	-	-	-	9 "
19.	Hoshea,	-	-	-	" 9 "

The Kingdom of Israel overthrown by the Assyrians, 724 B. C.

The Eloquent Orator.

CHAPTER XV.

HIS NATIVE PLACE.

ANCIENT Tarsus was an important city of the province of Cilicia, in Asia Minor, situated on the River Cydnus, about twelve miles from its entrance into the Mediterranean, on a large and fertile plain at the foot of the Taurus mountains.

Tarsus was a city of very great antiquity, and it is not certain who was the founder. Its first historical notice is given by Xenophon, author of the *Anabasis*, and other works. It held an important position as a military post in the wars of Alexander the Great and his successors, and passed from one conquering power to another, until it came under Roman control, when it was made a free city and in the time of Augustus, it was granted immunity from taxes.

The natives of Tarsus were distinguished for their intelligence and fondness for philosophical studies, and the city has given to the world some

notable philosophers, poets, grammarians, historians and physicians. Such was the native place of the Apostle Paul, a Jew whose remarkable career is given in the Sacred Scriptures.

The name of Paul's father is not known, but he was of the tribe of Benjamin, it is supposed, and doubtless a strict Pharisee who trained his son in the same doctrines. Paul had a sister and other relatives, some of whom were his fellow-prisoners, and it is believed he had kinsmen at Rome. It is supposed he belonged to a prominent family, since he declared that he suffered the loss of all things, but according to Jewish law that the sons should be trained in some useful occupation, whatever their station in life, Paul was taught the mechanic art of tent-making.

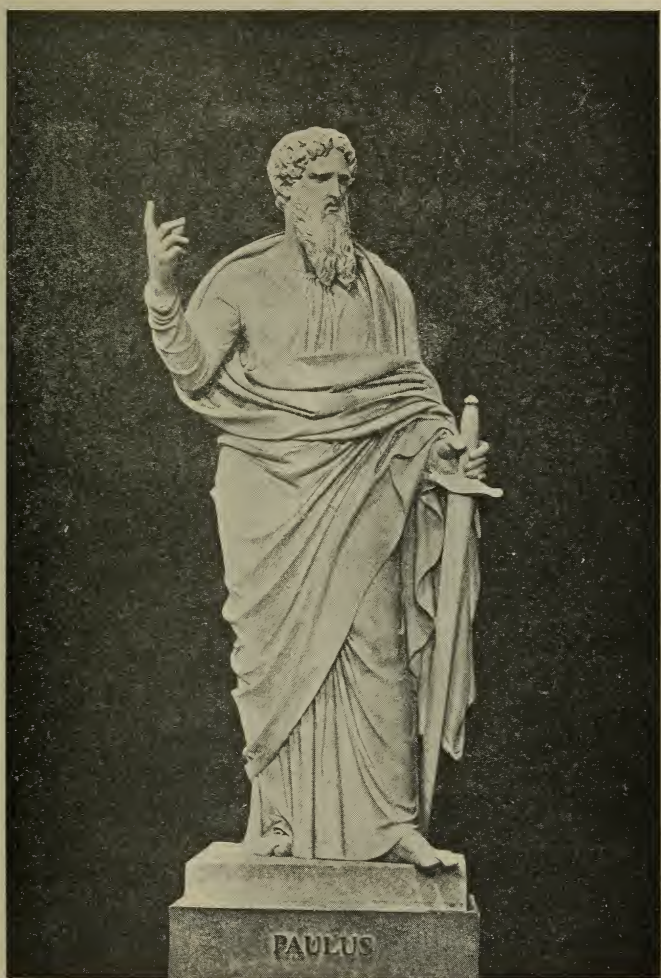
When the child was born; he was called Saul, a Hebrew name signifying "asked for" which was subsequently changed to Paul, a Latin word for small. Little is positively known of his personal appearance, though it is implied he was low in stature, and according to tradition, he was small, well-built, and graceful in motion and winning in manners. He was fair in complexion, his eyes were expressive, his nose aquiline, his forehead nearly bald, his beard thick. He is spoken of by Lucian, in derision, as "the high-nosed, bald-headed Galilean." His consti-

tution was infirm, and he is mentioned by Jerome as being afflicted with headache. Some critics have supposed he had a defect in his eyes, and that this was the "thorn in the flesh" of which the apostle speaks. He was so highly endowed with the gift of eloquence, that Longinus, a distinguished Greek philosopher, classed him among the greatest orators of antiquity, and when preaching at Lystra, he so impressed the people that they called him Mercury, the god of eloquence, while Barnabas they designated Jupiter, whose priest brought oxen and garlands with which to decorate the victims of sacrifice, to be offered to Paul and Barnabas.* When these disciples heard of it, they rent their clothes as an expression of horror, and hastened to stop the intended sacrifice, saying, "Why do ye these things? We are men like yourselves," that is are human, "and should not receive religious homage. We exhort you to turn from these vanities, unto the living God, the Creator of all things," etc. Notwithstanding his eloquence and powerful arguments, Paul found it difficult to restrain the people of Lystra from offering sacrifices to himself and Barnabas, yet strange to say, these same heathen who considered Paul a god, stoned him at the instigation of the Jews, and carried his body outside the walls, supposing he was dead, but when the disciples stood near their

departed friend, as they supposed, he rose from the ground and with them entered the city, and the next day left with Barnabas for Derbe.

Paul was thoroughly educated in the schools of Tarsus, then sent to Jerusalem to be trained under Gamaliel, according to the strictest rules of the Pharisees, in the national religion, and he became very zealous for the observance of the Laws of Moses. Gamaliel was an illustrious doctor of the Jewish law and grandson of Hillel, one of the distinguished compilers of the Talmud, the great depository of the doctrines and opinions of the Jews. The apostle, though a Jew, being a native of Tarsus, was neither a slave nor an alien, but was entitled to all the privileges of a Roman citizen, as he claimed on a certain occasion. Before his conversion, he was an intolerant persecutor of the Christians, and cherished his relentless animosity to its utmost extent the law would allow, but the Sanhedrim had no power to put offenders to death. It is said of Paul "he made havoc of the church," like a wild beast, and searched houses to find the disciples whom he forcibly conducted to prison. He approved of the sentence of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and was a witness of his death, by stoning.

Many of the Jews had emigrated to Damascus, a city in Syria, and among them were Christians



Paulus.

who may have gone there to avoid persecution. Paul determined to follow them, with the intention of bringing both men and women bound as prisoners to Jerusalem. Five or six days would be necessary to make the journey. It was essential he should have a commission from some accredited authority, therefore he went to the high priest for letters to the Jews, allowing him to arrest any Christians found in the city, and bring them to Jerusalem.

An escort being appointed to attend him, he started with his orders for arrests, crossed the Jordan to the mountainous region on the east side, the usual route to Syria, and travelled several days without any incident of special interest. Doubtless the mind of Paul was occupied with the object of his journey, and the success of his efforts to suppress the hated doctrines and worship of the Christians, whom he would punish in every way the law allowed, and his greatest dissatisfaction was, that it did not permit them to be put to death.

As they drew near Damascus, one day at noon, there appeared a strange phenomenon in the form of a supernatural light, surpassing that of the sun. Amazed and blinded by its brilliancy, Paul fell to the earth, when he heard a voice speaking in his native language, "Saul; Saul; why do you persecute me?"

The attendants of the apostle saw the light, but did not understand the words, not being acquainted with the language. The question is suggested, who were his companions? Were they Romans or Jews? They may have been Romans, but the Hebrew language which Paul understood, being an educated man, the common people at that time did not use, for after the captivity, they adopted a dialect called Syro-Chaldean or Syro-Phœnician. Paul inquired of the Voice, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," was the reply. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," that is goads, a figure of speech denoting it is difficult to resist successfully, the authority of One who has a right to command, or in other words, to oppose the leadings of Providence.

The term pricks applied to any sharp point, but it commonly meant an ox-goad which, among the Hebrews, was very large. The figure refers to a stubborn ox kicking against the goad, and as the ox would injure no one but himself, it was used to denote an obdurate and rebellious disposition. The men who journeyed with Saul to Damascus, may have been appointed to aid him or it has been suggested, they may have been travellers whom he chanced to meet with. On the appearance of the supernatural light they all fell to the earth, but soon arose and stood speech-

less. They heard a sound, but did not understand the words spoken to Saul.

The apostle inquired, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" The answer was, "Go into the city and it shall be told thee what to do." When Saul or Paul arose from the ground, he could not see, for his eyes had been blinded by the dazzling light. This darkness continued three days, during which he took no food or drink. There is no reason to suppose Saul's blindness was miraculous, for it is not unfrequently the case that persons have been deprived of their sight by watching an eclipse of the sun, or its brilliant splendor at its setting. The effect is caused by the intense action on the optic nerve. Sometimes it is permanent, and at others, it continues for a time when the sight is restored.

As the dazzling light had blinded Saul he was led by his attendants into Damascus and conducted to the house of Judas, probably a disciple, in a street called Straight. In the modern city there is a street by that name, extending from the eastern to the western gate. According to tradition, Saul had a vision here as recorded in 2 Corinthians xii. 2. The apostle saw one named Ananias coming to him and placed his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight. Some critics here supposed that Ananias was one of the seventy disciples sent to preach the gospel by the Saviour,

He had heard of Saul and his persecutions, and of his authority from the chief priests to bind all Christians found at Damascus, and conduct them as prisoners to Jerusalem, therefore, he hesitated when told to go to Saul, but the Lord said, "Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel for making known the gospel to the Jews, Gentiles and kings, and I will show him how great the sufferings he must endure for My name's sake."

When Ananias came to the blind penitent, he placed his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord even Jesus who appeared to thee, sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Immediately there fell from his eyes, as it were, scales, and he saw objects and was baptized. The scales was a figure of speech to denote the sudden cure. Saul's blindness was the result of a natural cause, but his restoration to sight was miraculous. He partook of food after his fast of three days, and regained his physical strength.

When a slave was bought, the owner put his mark or brand upon him, and Paul, in writing to the Galatians, said, "That he bore the mark of the Lord Jesus," and this may have been the "thorn in the flesh" of which he speaks.

Though his sight was restored after being blinded on his way to Damascus, yet it may have been somewhat impaired ever afterward, for on a

certain occasion, when he said to the high priest, "God will smite thee, thou whited wall," he apologized, saying he did not recognize the robes of the high priest, which may have been on account of imperfect sight. This idea seems to be confirmed by what the apostle wrote to the Galatians, namely, that "They were willing to pluck out their eyes and give them to him."

After his baptism, Paul preached in Damascus for a time, when he went to Arabia, and after three years, returned to Damascus. His Christian labors surprised his hearers, but aroused the enmity of the Jews who formed a plot to assassinate him, and to prevent his escape from the city, they watched the gates day and night. This conspiracy was known to Paul, when the disciples lowered him by night on the outside of the wall, in a basket, and he escaped to Jerusalem. As the walls of Damascus were not high, it was not a very difficult performance for his friends to lower him to the ground, and thus save his life.

Damascus is one of the most ancient cities of the world, and nearly four thousand years ago it was a flourishing and important town. It has passed through many changes under different rulers, but neither the Persians, Greeks, Romans, nor Moslems, who claim it at the present time, have been able wholly to destroy its fascinating

beauty. It is situated about fifty miles from the sea, in a fertile and extensive plain, watered by what the Greeks called "Golden River," of which the Abana and Pharpa are supposed to form branches. The exact date of its settlement is not certain, though there are many conjectures on the subject. The city was enclosed by a wall and was surrounded by a plain nearly eighty miles in circumference, while the land adjacent to the city afforded gardens of great extent which yielded fruits of various kinds. It was the capital of Syria in ancient times, and existed in the days of Abraham. Hadad, one of its kings, was conquered by David.

This renowned city was captured at different times by Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, the Maccabees, Romans, and Saracens, who made it a capital, until Bagdad became their chief city. It was taken by Tamerlane A. D. 1400, repaired by the Mamelukes, and finally captured by the Turks A. D. 1500. The Emperor Diocletian, A. D. 284-305, established a large factory for the manufacture of arms at this place, hence the origin of the famous Damascus blades.

After Paul escaped from Damascus and came to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the company of disciples in that city, but they did not believe he had been converted and, aware of his former persecuting spirit, they feared him. Though he

had been absent three years or more, probably these Christians at Jerusalem had not been informed of the change in Paul's feelings and conduct. Barnabas, a native of Cyprus, an island not far from Tarsus, was, it is presumed, acquainted with Paul either personally or by reputation, therefore he conducted him to the Apostles Peter, James, and perhaps some others, and related the circumstances of his conversion. After this introduction and explanation of Barnabas, he was admitted to their confidence and recognized as an apostle.

During the fifteen days of his sojourn at Jerusalem, Paul boldly declared, both to native and foreign Jews, that Jesus was the Christ. While some of his countrymen accepted his doctrines, the larger number rejected them and formed a conspiracy to murder him, when the Christians learning their plot, conducted him to Cesarea, and then sent him to Tarsus.

As he came in sight of his native city, where he had spent his childhood and early youth, in its celebrated schools, doubtless he was moved by many conflicting emotions. Only a few years before he, as a bigoted Pharisee, went to Jerusalem to complete his studies, cherishing the most bitter hatred toward the new sect called Christian, and determined to persecute them to the utmost. Now he returned to his early home as

one of the followers of the despised Nazarene, determined to lay down his life, if necessary, for His sake. Could a more remarkable moral change in his character have been effected? The whole course of his life would henceforth be entirely different from what he had planned in his youth.

The conversion of Paul was one of the most remarkable in the history of the church, and its influence more widely felt than that of any other Christian. He may be considered the pioneer of foreign missions.

CHAPTER XVI.

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

BARNABAS was sent by the church at Jerusalem to Antioch, to preach the gospel, and as a result, there was a great revival, therefore he needed an assistant in his labors. He went to Tarsus to seek the aid of Saul, or Paul, and conducted him to Antioch, where they labored one year, with great success. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, a name given to them either as a term of reproach, or assumed by themselves, in honor of their Divine Master. The name is used in the New Testament only twice besides in this place; as when Agrippa said to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," and again in 1 Peter iv. 16, "If any man suffer as a Christian," etc.

A brief description of Antioch is as follows: There were several cities, sixteen in all, known by this name, including those in Syria and Asia Minor. The one in Syria was situated on both sides of the River Orontes, about twenty miles from the sea. It dates from 300 B. C., and was a strongly fortified place, and reckoned as the

third city, in importance, of the Roman Empire.

It was nearly square and had many gates, and a circumference of twelve miles. This city was celebrated for its beautiful palaces, magnificent temples, numerous fountains, and the extent of its commerce.

The genius, learning, and culture of the inhabitants, were celebrated throughout the world. Cicero said, "It was a noble city abounding in eminent men." The larger number of its citizens were Greeks and Syrians, though many Jews settled there who were allowed its privileges equally, with the Greeks.

The heathen population had the reputation of being very immoral, and were largely the votaries of Venus and Bacchus. Such was this famous city in the time of the apostles, yet in this unpromising soil, Christianity took root. The church was greatly enlarged by the labors of Paul and Barnabas, and became their rendezvous, and also that of Peter. It was the native place of St. Luke.

It has been estimated that the Christians of Antioch in the fourth century, numbered 100,000, but there was a gradual decline in this powerful church, after flourishing three centuries, which suffered by terrible persecutions. The declension began at the close of the fourth century, when

the foundation of a general apostasy was laid that, in the course of two centuries, overspread the whole Christian world. The city of Antioch came under Moslem rule, and at the present day, is nearly in ruins. This celebrated metropolis was the ancient capital of the Greek kings of Syria, and was built by Seleucus Nicator, the founder of sixteen cities by the name of Antioch. In ancient times, the natives were celebrated for their sarcasm and ingenuity in devising nick-names. When the Persians invaded Syria, the people of Antioch made them the object of their witty jests, for which the conquerors totally destroyed their city, but it was rebuilt by the Romans. Subsequently, it was conquered by the Saracens, recovered by the Greeks, taken by the Mohammedans, captured by the Crusaders, and seized by the Sultan of Egypt. At the present time it forms a part of Syria. In 1872, it was nearly destroyed by an earthquake.

While Barnabas and Saul were at Antioch, there came to this city prophets from Jerusalem, and one of them named Agabus, predicted there would be a great famine throughout the world, meaning, probably, it would be extensive. This prediction was fulfilled in the reign of the Emperor Claudius Cæsar, 41-54 A. D. Four different famines occurred during his reign, in different parts of the world.

The disciples at Antioch united in a plan for assisting their brethren in Judea, by contributions, according to each one's ability, sent by Barnabas and Saul, or Paul, which were delivered to the elders of the church for distribution among the members. Having accomplished their mission they returned to Antioch.

There were in the church at this place certain prophets and teachers who, as they were engaged in united prayer, received a direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, saying, "Separate Barnabas and Saul or Paul for the work to which I have called them." When they had prayed they laid their hands on them and sent them to their field of labor. This was the first formal Christian mission to the Gentiles. Having been called to the work of preaching the gospel to the heathen, these missionaries departed for Seleucia, a city at the entrance of the River Orontes into the Mediterranean, where they embarked on board a ship for Cyprus.

This island was settled at a very early period by the Phœnicians and, according to tradition, Greeks settled here soon after the Trojan war. It became subject to the king of Egypt, then to the Persians, and after a severe struggle it regained its independence, but eventually it fell to the Ptolemys of Egypt. The Romans made Cyprus one of their provinces. Salamis its chief

city was founded, it is claimed, by a son of one of the Trojan heroes. It was nearly destroyed by an insurrection of the Jews and an earthquake in the reign of the Emperor Trajan, but was rebuilt by Constantine and named Constantia. A few ruins of the old town remain. There was a small island called Salamis, celebrated in classical history for the great naval battle between the Persians under Xerxes, and the Greeks, 480 B. C., in which the former were defeated.

While Barnabas and Saul were at Salamis, they preached the gospel in the synagogues of the Jews, many of whom were found in Cyprus as well as in all other places adjacent to Judea. The apostles uniformly proclaimed their doctrines first, to their own countrymen, but when they refused to listen, these evangelists sought the Gentiles and preached to them, often with remarkable success. John Mark was an attendant of Barnabas and Saul or Paul in this missionary tour who probably made the necessary arrangements for their comfort and the supply of their wants, during their journey. When they had gone through the island which was nearly one hundred and seventy miles from east to west, they came to Paphos, a city at the western extremity, and the residence of the proconsul. It contained a magnificent temple of Venus, the

favorite divinity of the island and according to tradition was her birthplace. Cyprus being subject to the Roman Emperor, was governed by a proconsul appointed by him. The name of this official in the time of Paul was Sergius Paulus who was an honorable man with liberal views, and willing to listen to any new ideas advanced. Having heard about Barnabas and Saul or Paul, he sent for them to hear for himself the doctrines they proclaimed. Bar-Jesus, a Jew called also Elymas the magician, resisted them, believing that if Paul and Barnabas gained an influence over the proconsul, he would lose his own popularity, therefore he sought to prevent this Roman official from becoming the friend and patron of Christians.

Paul being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes upon the sorcerer, saying, "O full of deceit and cunning, thou child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the ways of the Lord? Thou shalt be blind for a season." Immediately there came to him a darkness so intense that he could not see any object, and was obliged to have some one lead him by the hand. When the deputy saw what had occurred, he was convinced that Elymas was an impostor, and that the doctrine of Paul was true. This may have been an intellectual conviction only, and it

is not known whether he became a genuine convert.

Paul with his companions, Barnabas and John Mark, left Paphos in the Island of Cyprus, and sailed for Perga, a city in Pamphilia, a province of Asia Minor, opposite the island. Perga was the metropolis of Pamphilia, and was situated on the River Cestus, some distance from its mouth. There was a celebrated temple of Diana on a mountain near, at which were held yearly festivals. John Mark left his party and returned to Jerusalem for reasons not explained, but as the apostle was unwilling to take him as a travelling companion on a future occasion, it is presumed his conduct was not approved.

Barnabas and Paul came to Antioch in Pisidia, as it was called, to distinguish it from Antioch in Syria, and, though within the limits of Phrygia, it belonged to Pisidia. Phrygia in Asia Minor, varied in extent at different times. It formed the western part of the great central table-land of Asia Minor, while the north-eastern region, conquered by the Gauls, comprised the western part of Galatia, and eventually it came under Roman jurisdiction. This province was very rich in various kinds of productions, and in some places there were salt lakes. Its mountains furnished gold and marble, its valleys oil and wine, its hills afforded pasture

for sheep, and its marshes yielded abundance of salt.

Phrygia occupied an important position in early Greek culture and music, especially that of the flute. The kingdom of Phrygia which claimed a great age, was conquered by Crœsus, and at one period, constituted a part of the Persian dominions, and subsequently the Syro-Grecian empire. After their conquest, the Phrygians seemed to have lost all intellectual activity and became proverbial for their stupidity and submissive spirit, especially among the Greeks and Romans, who regarded them with contempt.

When these missionaries came to Antioch in Pisidia, they went into a synagogue on the Sabbath and sat down. The rulers of the synagogue who were conducting the services, comprising the reading of the law and the prophets, recognizing Paul and Barnabas as Jews, said to them, "Men and brethren, if ye have anything to say to the people, we will hear it." Then Paul arose and making a gesture with his hand, began his discourse by the prologue, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give attention." "Ye that fear God" may have referred to proselytes who had accepted the Jewish religion. The apostle's ultimate design was to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, but to attain this object



Paul at Ephesus.



it was important to avoid arousing their prejudice, therefore he declared he was a firm believer in the doctrines of their fathers, as revealed in their Scriptures. Paul rehearses in a summary manner, the history of his nation, and affirms that a promise had been given, that a Saviour should be sent into the world, and that He had come and had suffered death. He refers to the testimony of John the Baptist in support of his theory. A favorite doctrine of the Jews was, that they were, in a special sense, the people of God, therefore Paul reminds them of many events in their remarkable history, as their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, their conquest of Canaan, the period of the Judges, the establishment of monarchy, and reign of the Shepherd king from whom Jesus descended, according to the flesh. "Men and brethren, descendants of Abraham," or native Jews, "and whoever among you feareth God"—or proselytes—"to you is the message of salvation sent." The gospel was first preached to the Jews, and Christ Himself was sent to them.

The apostle then refers to the rulers of his people at Jerusalem, who, though they read the prophets every Sabbath day, yet they did not understand their predictions concerning the Messiah, that He would be poor, a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and that He

would be put to death according to their request, and that He would rise again that salvation from sin and its consequences might be proclaimed to all the world. Paul then closes his address by a solemn warning, lest the calamity threatened by the prophets should come upon them. The above is a brief summary of the apostle's discourse, in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia.

When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and Greek proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas who exhorted them to be steadfast in the grace of God. The news concerning the evangelists was circulated among the people, when a great multitude, on the next Sabbath, assembled to hear the word of God, but when the Jews witnessed their popularity, they were envious and contradicted the apostles, and treated with scorn the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Then Paul and Barnabas became more bold, saying, "That it was according to the Divine will, that the gospel should first be preached to the Jews, but as ye will not listen, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we offer these blessings to the Gentiles, for the Lord said, 'I have sent thee to be a light to the Gentiles that thou shouldst be the instrument of salvation to all the world.'" When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and those who were disposed to accept, believed, so that the gospel

was published throughout all the region, but the Jews aroused the opposition of the chief men of the city and, aided by the women of rank and influence, they incited a persecution against the apostles and banished them from the province, when they went to Iconium, but the disciples in Antioch were inspired with joy in their new experience, guided by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Iconium, in Asia Minor, was, in Paul's day, a flourishing city with a mixed population of Jews and Greeks. It was situated about one hundred and twenty miles from the Mediterranean and is represented as having a fine climate with gardens and meadows surrounded by lofty mountains covered with perpetual snow. It was an important city in the time of the Crusades. A church was established at this place by the Apostle Paul, 45 A. D., that continued to flourish until the persecutions by the Saracens and Turks. The city still exists under a different name, and contains a number of mosques, colleges, and other public buildings, but it is in a state of decline. It was at Iconium that Paul first became acquainted with Timothy. Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue and preached to the people with such success, that a great number, both Jews and Greeks, believed. The apostles continued a long time in the city, speaking boldly

in the name of the Lord Jesus, and performed many miracles, but the unbelieving Jews aroused the opposition of the Gentiles against them, and there was a division, part of the citizens taking the side of the Jews, and part that of the apostles, when a mob collected, comprising both Jews and Gentiles, with the intention of stoning Paul and Barnabas who, being aware of their plot, fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, a province of Asia Minor, where they preached the gospel throughout the whole region. These two cities were near each other. While at Lystra, Paul healed a cripple who had been lame from his birth, while he was preaching to the multitude. The apostle observing the lame man said to him in a loud voice, "Stand on thy feet," and immediately he sprang up and walked. When the people saw what was done, they shouted in the language of Lycaonia, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury. The priests of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands to the gate, to offer sacrifice to the apostles. The victims offered in sacrifice were usually decorated with chaplets of flowers.

When the apostles were aware of their intention, as previously mentioned, they rent their clothes as an expression of their abhorrence, and hastened to the people, saying, "Sirs, why do ye

these things? We are men like yourselves and we come to make known that ye should cease to worship idols, and should serve the living God who is the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein, and gives us all our blessings," etc., yet with these arguments, they were so confident that the apostles were gods, it was difficult to restrain them from offering sacrifices.

Wherever these evangelists went to preach the gospel, they encountered the opposition of their own countrymen. Jews from Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra for the purpose of arousing opposition, when they stoned Paul, as previously mentioned, and, supposing he was dead, they carried his body outside the walls and left it unburied. Paul was only stupefied by the stoning, and as the disciples stood about his unconscious body, he arose and went into the city and the next day left with Barnabas for Derbe, a town of Lycaonia, the residence of Antipater, a friend of Cicero. When they had preached the gospel in that city they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. These apostles manifested remarkable courage in returning to the places where they had been persecuted, and in one instance stoned. Their object was to confirm the young converts who were surrounded by enemies and exposed to temptations, and as they had but a slight acquaintance with the gospel, it was important

they should be further instructed. The apostles exhorted them to continue in the faith and reminded them that it was through great tribulation that we enter the kingdom of God. When Paul and Barnabas had appointed elders in every church, and had commended them to the Lord with prayer and fasting, they travelled throughout Pisidia and came to Pamphylia, a province of Asia Minor, and after preaching in Perga during their second visit, they went to Attalia, a city on the seashore, built by Attalus Philadelphus, king of Pergamus, who gave it his own name. It was here they embarked for Antioch when they had been appointed as travelling missionaries, and when the church assembled, the apostles rehearsed what had been their experience, their dangers and their successes, and how they had preached the gospel to the Gentiles. Here they remained a long time with the disciples, but how long they were at Antioch is not intimated, though nothing more is heard of them until the council at Jerusalem assembled to settle a question of dispute about circumcision. It is supposed that an interval of from five to eight years occurred, of which there is no account in the Scriptures, but it is probable that Paul made several journeys to different places during this period. To this time, Christians had suffered violent persecutions from their enemies, but now

the churches were at peace ; and at Antioch they enjoyed great prosperity. In none of them had there been any internal conflicts of opinions or practices, but this union was soon to be interrupted. Certain men from Judea, probably converted Jews, came to Antioch and the regions adjacent, and said to the disciples, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Paul and Barnabas held an earnest discussion with them on the subject, since important principles were to be settled affecting the organization of the Christian church. The doctrines advanced by the messengers from Judea would tend to distract the minds of Christians, and for this reason it was important to oppose them, therefore it was agreed that these preachers, with certain others, should go to Jerusalem and have the question settled by the apostles and elders of that city. The authority of the earlier apostles would be acknowledged by all, as they had been instructed by the Saviour Himself. It is supposed that this journey to Jerusalem was the one to which Paul refers in his Epistle to the Galatians, in which he affirms it was fourteen years after his conversion. Among those who accompanied Paul, was Titus, a converted Greek, and subsequently his travelling companion. It was customary for Christians to attend the

apostles in their travels, therefore some members of the church accompanied Paul, who passed through Phenice and Samaria, making known the glad tidings of the conversion of the Gentiles, which caused great joy among the brethren. These places were on their direct route to Jerusalem.

Phenice or Phenicia was a province of Syria, and has been considered the birthplace of commerce, and was eminent in ancient art and literature. The Phœnicians constructed the Temple of Solomon, while their sailors navigated his ships. Their enterprising spirit led them to establish colonies in different parts of Asia, Europe, Africa, and probably in many of the islands of the Mediterranean, but the most famous of their colonies was that of Carthage. They attracted to their coast nearly all the commerce between the East and the West.

Samaria, with its capital city of the same name, was a celebrated region in the history of the Israelites, as is well known by students of the Sacred Scriptures.

When Paul and his companions arrived at Jerusalem, they were received in a hospitable and friendly manner by the apostles, elders and private members of the church, and acknowledged by them as Christian brethren, when Paul and Barnabas related the facts about the conversion

of the Gentiles, and the origin of the question in dispute. They were, however, opposed by certain Pharisees, who affirmed that the rite of circumcision should be administered to the Gentile converts. A convention was called comprising apostles, elders, and members of the church to settle the dispute, and after much discussion, Peter arose to address the audience.

There was a propriety in his taking the lead in this controversy, for he was, probably, the oldest of those assembled and the most accustomed to speak, besides, he had witnessed the conversion of Gentiles without the Mosaic rites. He begins his argument by addressing them as follows: "Men and brethren, ye know that some time ago God chose me to preach the gospel to the Gentiles," referring to Cornelius and those assembled at Cesarea, "to whom was given the Holy Spirit, making no distinction between them and us, though they had not conformed to the law of Moses. Now, why tempt God by putting a yoke upon the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? We believe we shall be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Then the company of private Christians listened to Paul and Barnabas as they declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. The company of

private Christians listened to Paul and Barnabas, who related to them an account of their labors. After they had closed their remarks, the Apostle James made a speech. This was James, the son of Alpheus, called James the Less, to distinguish him from James the Greater.

He said, "Men and brethren, listen to me. Simeon," the Hebrew name for Simon, and applied to Peter, "hath declared how God did at first visit the Gentiles, to choose a people for His name, according to the prophets, therefore, I give my opinion that we trouble not the Gentile Christians by imposing upon them burdensome rites and ceremonies. I recommend that we write to them as an expression of our judgment, that they abstain from certain practices considered wrong, and that they avoid the gross vices common amongst the heathen, which the law of Moses prohibited, and which is read in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

The suggestion of James was approved by the apostles and elders, and also by the whole church, therefore they chose Paul and Barnabas with Judas and Silas to carry letters on the subject to the Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. In this letter special mention is made of Paul and Barnabas, who hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the messengers were dismissed, they

started on their journey and came to Antioch, and when they had called together the multitude, they delivered the epistle which, after it was read, caused great rejoicing for the consolation it afforded. This closes the account of the first Christian council,—Judas and Silas being preachers, exhorted the brethren and confirmed them by their instructions. After remaining at Antioch for a time, Judas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained. Meanwhile Paul and Barnabas continued at Antioch laboring with many others, for the advancement of Christianity. After some time, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they should visit the cities where they had preached the gospel, to learn the condition of the churches. Barnabas approved of the plan, but he wished to take with him John Mark, his nephew, but Paul thought it would not be best since he, on a former occasion, left them in Pamphylia without a reasonable cause. A sharp contention occurred between them,* which resulted in a separation, when Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, the native place of Barnabas, while Paul chose Silas, and being commended in prayer to God, by the brethren, went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches. Silas has been supposed by some, to have been one of the seventy disciples sent by their Lord to proclaim the gospel. He became the travelling com-

panion of Paul after his separation from Barnabas, about whom nothing further is revealed in the Scriptures. This eminent evangelist and successful laborer, it is said, was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, educated by Gamaliel, the instructor of Paul. His name was Joses to which the apostle added Barnabas, meaning the "son of consolation." The contention between Paul and Barnabas which led to the occupation of different fields of labor, though to be regretted as an illustration of human frailty, was overruled for the advancement of the gospel, since they proclaimed it in a wider region. It is believed this difference of opinion between Paul and Barnabas was subsequently reconciled, when they again became travelling companions. There is evidence also that Paul became reconciled to John Mark, to which the apostle alludes in his Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, Philemon, and Timothy.

CHAPTER XVII.

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

ACCOMPANIED by Silas, Paul returned to Derbe and Lystra where he met a disciple named Timotheus or Timothy, a native of one of these cities, whose mother, named Eunice, was a Jewess, and a Christian, but his father was a Greek. It was not allowed by their law for Jews to intermarry with Gentiles, but this injunction was not strictly observed by those especially, living in heathen lands.

Timothy at this time, was a very young man, and Paul addressed him as such when he was urged to take charge of the church at Ephesus. He was highly esteemed for his piety and promise for future usefulness, by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. He had been carefully trained in a knowledge of the Scriptures by his mother, but his father being a Greek, he had not been circumcised, when Paul had the rite administered to him, on account of the Jews who understood that his father was a Gentile. This was an expedient adopted by the apostle for the sake of peace.

As Paul and Silas journeyed through the cities of Syria, Cilicia and other places, they delivered to the Christians the decision of the Council at Jerusalem on the question submitted to it. This document may have been an attested copy of the letter sent to the various churches of the Gentiles by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, the object of which was to establish them in the faith and increase their numbers.

Cilicia was a district in the southeastern part of Asia Minor enclosed on all sides except the western, by natural boundaries. The Syrians are supposed to have been the earliest inhabitants. It was conquered by the Persians, and later by Alexander, and formed a part of the kingdom of the Seleucidæ. Its inhabitants comprising different tribes, were robbers and pirates, until Pompey subdued them, when their country became a Roman province, 67 B. C. They were called by the Greeks and Romans the "Three bad K's," as their names began with that letter.

After Paul and Silas had travelled through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden to preach the word in Asia. Galatia was a province in Asia Minor, formerly conquered and settled by the Gauls to which they gave their name. They invaded the country at different times and many of them settled there. Jews also had migrated to this region.

The people of Galatia adopted, to a great extent, the habits and religious customs of the Greeks, but preserved their own language and forms of governments. They comprised three great tribes, each divided into four parts, and at the head of these were twelve men with one chief or leader called a tetrarch, while under him were several different officers. Many Christian churches were established in Galatia, but the members were mostly Jewish converts.

Why the evangelists, Paul and Silas, were forbidden, by a Divine revelation, to preach at this time the word of God, and the glad tidings of salvation by Christ, to the inhabitants of Asia, though formerly their labors had been confined to this region, was, doubtless, that the gospel might be introduced into Greece, hence into Europe. After they came to Mysia, they intended to go into Bythinia, a province of Asia Minor, but were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to do so, therefore they came to Troas a city on the Hellespont. Sometimes the name Troas or Troad is used to denote the entire country of the Trojans, the province where the ancient city of Troy had stood, a region celebrated in early Grecian history, and where the events recorded in the Iliad are supposed to have occurred. The city was destroyed and no vestige of it remains. Paul being an educated man, was doubtless familiar with

classical literature, and to him the places he was about to visit, would be specially interesting.

The Greek name for Troy was Ilium, which stood on a large plain surrounded by mountains, one being named Mount Ida. The city was destroyed by the Greeks, but was rebuilt and called Ilium Novum, which finally came under the dominion of the Romans when they became masters of the world. When Paul was at Troas he had a vision in which appeared a man who, perhaps by his speech, was taken for a Macedonian, saying, "Come to Macedonia and help us." This was a call to preach the gospel in a new field which might be attended with great hardship and danger. Macedonia was an extensive region with Thrace on the north, Thessaly on the south, Epirus on the west and the *Ægean* Sea on the east. It became celebrated in the reign of Philip and his son Alexander the Great. It was the first place in which the gospel was preached in Europe.

Setting sail from Troas, we, says the writer, came in a direct course to Samothracia, an island in the *Ægean* Sea about twenty miles in circumference, and an asylum for fugitives and criminals, and the next day to Neapolis a maritime city of Macedonia. This is the first instance in which Luke refers to himself as being in company with Paul. It is probable that he joined him



Paul Preaching to the Thessalonians.

about this time, and attended him in his future travels. They journeyed from Neapolis to Philippi named by King Philip, and famous for being the place where several battles were fought during the civil wars of the Romans, and especially the decisive battle between Brutus and Antony. There was a Christian church established here, to which Paul afterward wrote his Epistle to the Philippians. Paul and his companions remained there for several days. There were Jews in this city as in most others, who still observed many of their religious ceremonies. On the Sabbath, they went out of the city to the side of the river where there was a place of prayer. Such places were established by the Jews in the vicinity of towns and cities, especially where they were forbidden by the magistrates to build synagogues. These places of prayer were simply enclosures constructed of stones, in a grove or under a tree.

The missionaries sat down and addressed the women who resorted thither. Among them was a certain woman named Lydia, whose business consisted in selling purple dyes obtained from shellfish, and was highly prized on account of the color which was chiefly worn by princes and the wealthy classes. This dye was obtained from Thyatira a city in the province of Lydia in Asia Minor. The art of dyeing was a prominent oc-

cupation in that city, settled by a colony from Macedonia. It was the seat of one of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation. In the message to the churches the faith, patience, and charity of the members of this church are commended, but they are censured for tolerating the false prophetess, Jezebel, who encouraged gross vices for which fearful judgments are threatened.

Lydia was probably a Jewish proselyte who had studied the Scriptures, and when she heard Paul, she believed the gospel and was baptized together with the members of her family who also accepted it. After this ceremony was performed, she said to Paul and Silas, "If ye consider me a believer, come to my house and abide there while you remain in the city." "On a certain day," says the writer, "as we were going to the place of prayer, a damsel possessed with the spirit of divination," according to pagan ideas, "who, by her soothsaying brought her masters much gain, followed us publicly proclaiming, 'These men are the servants of the Most High God, and show us the way to salvation.'" Her motive in pursuing such a course is not certain. It may have been to gain a reward from Paul and Silas, or some other selfish reason, but it is more probable that she was convinced that they were the servants of God. She fol-

lowed them for several days when Paul, grieved at the annoyance, and believing she was under the influence of an evil spirit, turned around and said, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her," when the demon immediately left the damsel.

When her masters saw the hope of their gains was gone, they were very angry and determined to seek revenge. They seized Paul and Silas and forcibly brought them to the market-place where was the court or forum, near which trials were conducted, and delivered them to the magistrates, military rulers or pretors. As Philippi was a Roman colony, perhaps the army officers performed the duties of both civil and military rulers. When their enemies brought them to the magistrates, they presented their charges which were not the loss of their gains, but they pretended they were anxious about the violation of the laws and the safety of the city, hence they were disturbers of the public peace. They said, "These men who are Jews exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs not lawful for us to observe, being Romans." By "customs," in this charge, is intended religious rites or forms of worship. This aroused the people, when the magistrates stripped Paul and Silas of their garments, which was always done when one was to be scourged, and delivered them to the lictors, to

be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely, who, having received such a charge, put them into the safest cells and made their feet secure in the stocks. After such severe scourging, their condition must have caused them great suffering, yet at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God, and were heard by the other prisoners. While they were engaged in these devotional exercises, a mysterious phenomenon occurred.

As they were engaged in prayer and singing, an earthquake suddenly shook the foundations of the prison, when all the doors were opened, and the chains of the prisoners were loosed, thus liberating them, so that it was possible for them to escape, yet no one made the attempt. When the keeper of the prison awoke from sleep by this strange occurrence, seeing the prison doors were open, he supposed the inmates had escaped, and alarmed, he drew his sword intending to take his own life. It was customary to hold the jailer responsible for the safe keeping of the prisoners, and to subject him to the same punishment due to them if he suffered them to escape. Suicide was approved among the Greeks and Romans in case of emergency, as Cato, Brutus, and Cassius, besides others, are examples.

When Paul saw what the jailer was about to do, he exclaimed in a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." The keeper called for lights, and alarmed at the earthquake, and surprised that the prisoners had not escaped, and that Paul and Silas were so calm, he came trembling and fell down at their feet as an act of profound reverence, then brought them out of prison, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The answer was simple, concise, and decisive. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and the same blessing would be granted to the members of his family who believed. Paul and Silas preached the word of the Lord to the household of the jailer, who bathed their wounds inflicted by scourging, and the same night, was baptized, together with the members of his family who believed. When the jailer had brought them to his house, he gave them food to eat.

The next morning, the magistrates, perhaps terrified by the earthquake, an event regarded by heathen nations as an omen denoting the presence of their divinities, or they might have felt that they did wrong in sending Paul and Silas to prison without a trial, sent the serjeants, or public officers who went before the magistrates with the emblems of authority to release the prisoners. In Rome, they bore what was called *fascēs*

consisting of a bundle of rods with an axe in the centre. When the keeper of the prison received the orders of the magistrates he informed Paul, saying, "Now therefore depart, and go in peace," but the apostle replied, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison. Now do they thrust us out privately? Not so; let them come themselves and bring us out." Paul and Silas were Jews by birth, but they had been made Roman citizens, therefore entitled to the privileges of such. It was expressly forbidden that a Roman citizen should be scourged. "No," said Paul, decidedly, "the magistrates should come themselves and bring us out of prison." When the serjeants repeated the words of Paul to the magistrates, they were alarmed when they learned that the prisoners were Roman citizens. They came and urged them to depart out of their city. The liberated prisoners went to the house of Lydia, and meeting the brethren, they encouraged them; and then departed from Philippi, that is Paul and Silas left but, probably, Luke and Timothy remained or sought some other field of labor.—The church at Philippi, founded 52 A. D., was regarded with special favor by the apostle.

The Christians at this place were grateful for the gospel they received through Paul's labors, and on several occasions sent him aid while he

was in Achaia, and when he was a prisoner at Rome, Epaphroditus was sent by the church at Philippi as a messenger to take contributions to Paul, while a prisoner at Rome, and to render him needed service. He performed his duties with such zeal that his health was impaired, and he was obliged to remain some time, but the next year, 62 A. D., Epaphroditus returned to Philippi, for the Christians there were greatly troubled when they heard of his illness. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians was written when he was a prisoner at Rome.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEW FIELDS OF LABOR.

AFTER Paul and Silas left Philippi, they went to Thessalonica, a seaport of Macedonia and inhabited by Greeks, Romans and Jews. In their journey, they passed through Amphipolis, meaning around the city, colonized by the Athenians, and made the capital of eastern Macedonia by the Romans, thence to Apollonia, formerly much celebrated for its trade. When they arrived at Thessalonica, Paul, as was his custom, attended worship in the synagogue of the Jews, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and maintaining the doctrine that it was necessary Christ should suffer death, and rise again, and that Jesus was the Messiah, according to the Scriptures, for He was born in Bethlehem, as predicted, was of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of the royal line of David, that He came at the time predicted, that His miracles proved He was the Christ, and that His resurrection confirmed this doctrine.

Some of the apostle's hearers believed, including Greek proselytes, and women of rank and influence.

The successful labors of the evangelists aroused their old enemy, the unbelieving Jews who, influenced by envy, collected a mob of idle, dissipated, and worthless fellows loitering about the market-place or forum, and caused a great commotion in the city. Jason, a relative of Paul, had entertained him and Silas at his house, therefore the mob made an assault with the design of arresting them, but failing in their scheme, they seized Jason and certain others, and forcibly conducted them to the rulers. They accused Paul and Silas of "Turning the world upside down," while Jason, they said, "had received these disturbers of the public peace, whose deeds are opposed to the decrees of Cæsar, since they affirm there is another king called Jesus."

The rulers feared the result of mob rule, and the people feared the Romans, when they heard the charges brought against Paul and Silas. Jason offered security for the good conduct of the apostle and his companion, when the brethren sent them directly to Berea by night. The gospel, however, had taken root in Thessalonica, and Paul subsequently addressed two epistles to the church in that city.

After leaving that place, these missionaries came to Berea, a city of Macedonia, and, according to their custom, began their labors among their own countrymen. The Bereans, it is said, were more

generous, liberal, and more disposed to examine candidly, the doctrines of the apostle, and searched the Scriptures daily to see if they were true, than the people of Thessalonica. Many of them including women of rank and influence believed, but when the Jews of Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching at Berea, they came to the city and tried to arouse the public against him, as they had previously done. This might endanger the life of the apostle, therefore the Christians took him to the seacoast and sent him by ship to Athens, but Silas and Timothy remained at Berea.

This was Paul's first visit to this celebrated city of Greece, but his success as a preacher of the gospel there, was not great, though some of the Athenians believed, including Dionysius, the Areopagite, or one connected with the court of that name, perhaps as one of the judges, and a woman named Damaris, probably a person of influence, and some others.

Athens, one of the most celebrated cities of antiquity, was distinguished for its political and military power, for the learning, eloquence, and accomplished manners of its citizens, and for its works in art and science. The ancient city was surrounded by walls of great strength and width. Theseus united the twelve independent states of Attica in one and made Athens the capital.

The city was burned by Xerxes the Persian, 480 B. C., but was rebuilt by Pericles 460–429, B. C., in whose time it reached its greatest splendor. It depended chiefly upon the public buildings for its architectural renown. The Acropolis contained works that were the pride of the Athenians, comprising paintings, sculptures, and other works of art.

The Parthenon contained the temple of Minerva, a building 217 feet in length and 98 in breadth, which was destroyed by the Persians but rebuilt by Pericles with greater splendor than the first building. It contained the statue of Minerva, the work of Phidias, made of ivory, thirty-nine feet in height, and covered with pure gold. Without the walls of the city were temples dedicated to the gods, but the one called the Temple of Jupiter Olympus surpassed every other building of Athens, in magnificence. About the exterior were one hundred and twenty fluted columns sixty feet in height, and with its courts, it covered half a mile in circumference.

The Acropolis was a steep rock in the centre of the city, about 150 feet high, 1,150 feet long and 500 broad, while its summit was covered with temples, statues, and other works of art, but one of the most distinguished buildings, next to the Temple of Jupiter Olympus, perhaps, was the Parthenon. North of this was the Erechtheum,

containing three separate temples, and near these buildings was the colossal statue of Athene or Minerva, whose helmet and spear were the first objects visible from the sea. The walls of ancient Athens enclosed a larger space than the modern city.

The hills, including Mars' Hill, which gave the name to the celebrated court that assembled there, the Hill of the Nymphs, and the Pnyx, where, in early times, popular assemblies were held, but later at the Theatre of Bacchus. Temples were dedicated to Mars, Juno, and a large number of other gods. Among other noted buildings were the Senate House, the Tholus, where Spartan heroes offered their sacrifices, the Stoa, or halls supported by columns and used as places of resort in the heat of the day. There were three buildings or theatres for contests in vocal and instrumental music. The monument of Andronicus, called also the "Tower of the Winds," and the monument sometimes erroneously called the "Lantern of Demosthenes," are said to be still in existence. The Academia was an institution of the ancient city, and the tombs of the Athenians killed in battle, were in a suburb northwest of the town.

After the Roman conquest, Athens became a flourishing city, and during the early centuries of the Christian era, it was one of the chief seats of

learning to which the Romans were accustomed to send their sons to complete their education. This remarkable city has suffered from the calamities of war, and has several times been captured, destroyed, and rebuilt. The last conquest was by the Turks in the early period of the nineteenth century, but it has since been recovered by the Greeks, and the gospel has been introduced by missionaries since the visit of Paul, many centuries ago.

The apostle, while at Athens, sent for Silas and Timothy, who were at Berea, to come as soon as possible, and while waiting for them, he had an opportunity to observe the moral condition of its citizens, who were grossly devoted to the worship of false gods, a fact confirmed by contemporary historians. The temples, altars, and idols were so numerous, that it was said, "It was easier to find a god than a man."

Paul, the man of culture, who, doubtless, knew something of Greek art and learning, while waiting for his companions, was more affected by the idolatry of the inhabitants than by the splendor and magnificence of the city, therefore he reasoned with any one who would listen to him, including Jews, devout persons, or Jewish proselytes, and with those he met in the marketplace or forum. Athens was distinguished above all other cities, for its philosophers, therefore

there were various schools or sects, including the Epicureans named for Epicurus, who lived about 300 B. C. They denied that God created the world, or that the gods had any interest in human affairs; neither did they believe in the immortality of the soul. One of their prominent doctrines was that pleasure was the chief good, and that virtue was to be practiced only as it contributed to this end, but Epicurus intended only rational pleasure controlled by common sense. His followers, however, sought happiness in sensuality and other corrupt practices.

The Stoics were a sect of philosophers named from Stoa, the Greek for porch or portico, because Zeno, the founder of the sect, taught in a porch at Athens. He was a native of Cyprus, but taught in this city forty-eight years, and died 264 B. C., at the age of ninety-six years. The Stoics believed that God was the Creator of the universe, that all things were settled by the Fates, and that God even was under their dominion; that happiness consisted in the insensibility of the soul to pain, and that man should gain absolute mastery over all the passions and affections of his nature, and that matter was eternal. There was, however, a want of uniformity of belief among their members. They were strict in their views of virtue, and were boastful of their own righteousness.

Some of the philosophers of the Epicureans and the Stoics contended with Paul, and said with a sneer, "What will this babbler say?" Others affirmed that he taught the existence of strange gods, because he preached of Jesus and the resurrection. They conducted Paul to Areopagus or Mars' Hill, where the supreme judges of Athens assembled, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine of which thou speakest is?" Their object appears to have been, not to try him, but to understand more fully the doctrines he taught; they were willing to hear before they passed judgment. Athens, it has been shown, was distinguished for its schools of philosophy, its art and learning, and was the resort of people from other countries who desired to become acquainted with its institutions and listen to its sages. "The Athenians and strangers," it is said, "spent all their time in hearing and telling something new." This habit is mentioned by several ancient writers, and it is stated there were more than three hundred public places in the city, where the people were accustomed to meet for conversation and inquiry.

It was in the presence of the philosophers and learned men of Athens, who regarded him with contempt and called him a "babbling," that Paul was to preach the gospel. His personal appearance and nationality would not be favorable to

his success, yet he did not hesitate to perform what he considered his duty. Paul advanced, and, standing in the court of the Areopagites, he explained the doctrines he had proclaimed, only an outline of which, probably, the sacred writer has afforded, but sufficient to give an idea of the manner he adopted with the Greek philosophers. The speaker was calm, serious, and respectful in his argument, and understood the character of his audience. He began, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive you have a great reverence for the gods, for as I passed by and beheld your altars, I saw one with the inscription, 'To the unknown God.' Him whom ye worship ignorantly, I make known to you." It was customary in heathen lands to erect altars to unknown divinities.

The main object of the apostle's discourse was to convince his hearers of the folly and sin of idolatry, and the necessity of repentance. He said, "God, the Creator of all things and Lord of the heavens and the earth, does not dwell in temples constructed by human hands, neither is He sustained by any offerings presented to Him, since He is 'the source of life to every living creature, and has made all nations of one blood,' that is, they all descended from the same ancestor, however different in complexion, features, language, etc., therefore, in a broad sense, they were all brethren; that God had designated their

future abodes, referring to the dispersion of the race, that they should seek the Lord when they behold His wonderful works, for, said the speaker, "it is by Him we live, and are His offspring, as certain of your poets have said." This is an evidence that Paul was acquainted with Greek literature, and shows his skill in addressing his audience. The conclusion was, that if we are the children of God, it is absurd to suppose He can be represented by images made of gold, silver, stone, or any other material, by the hand of man.

Paul affirmed that during the long period before the introduction of the gospel, the Creator exercised great forbearance toward idolatrous nations, but now He commandeth all persons everywhere to repent, for He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by the One "whom He hath raised from the dead."

When they heard of the resurrection, some of the philosophers derided him, while others said, "We will hear thee again about this matter." None of the Greeks, except a few, accepted Paul's doctrines, and he soon left Athens, without establishing a church.

CHAPTER XIX.

NEW FIELDS OF LABOR—CONCLUDED.

As the apostle found Athens a barren field for Christian labor, and believed there was no prospect of success, he left for Corinth, a populous and wealthy city, but one of the most luxurious and dissolute, yet he was successful in founding a church there, to which he subsequently addressed two epistles. A brief description of this ancient city is as follows :

It was situated on the isthmus which separates the Peloponnesus from Attica, and on account of its position, was of great commercial importance ; this advantage contributed to the wealth and luxury of the citizens. It was built on the north side of Mt. Acro-Corinthus, which is 1,900 feet in height and between 600 and 700 feet in circumference. This Mount served as the citadel of Corinth, which has two harbors, one on the east side and one on the west side. In early times its great commercial importance was maintained by a powerful navy, and here were built the first triremes—vessels or galleys, with three benches of oars on one side,—and the first sea-fight on

record, is said to have been fought between the Corinthians and the Corcyraens. At an early period, Corinth established colonies in various regions.—The city was adorned with magnificent buildings, and in no other Grecian town, except Athens, were the fine arts advanced with such vigor and success. Corinth rose in magnitude and grandeur, while its temples, palaces, theatres, and other public buildings, adorned with columns and statues, were the pride of its inhabitants and the admiration of strangers. The order or style of architecture designated “The Corinthian,” distinguished for its ornate column, originated in this city. Some of its celebrated works of art were the citadel, the grottoes over the Fountain Pyrene, constructed of white marble and sacred to the Muses, the theatre and stadium of the same material, the Temple of Neptune with the chariots of that deity, and also that of his wife, Amphitrite, drawn by horses covered with gold. The avenue leading to the Temple of Neptune was decorated on one side with the statues of those who were successful at the Isthmian games, and on the other side with rows of tall pines.

The Isthmian games were one of the great national festivities of Greece, celebrated on the Isthmus of Corinth in April or May every alternate year. They consisted of all kinds of athletic sports, and also contests in music and

poetry. The prize was a simple garland of pine leaves.

Corinth was celebrated for its learning and was called by Cicero, "The Light of all Greece." It contained schools in which philosophy and rhetoric were publicly taught, therefore strangers from other countries came thither to complete their education. It was said as a commendation, that "It does not fall to the lot of every one to visit Corinth," but the fame of this celebrated city was fearfully dishonored by the immorality of its inhabitants. The worship of Venus prevailed, and a large number of her votaries were maintained in her temple. Such was the condition of this distinguished city, when Paul introduced the gospel, about 52 A. D., and continued to labor there nearly two years. He gained many converts, organized a Christian church to which, subsequently, he wrote two epistles, the first written at Ephesus, in which he reproves the Corinthian disciples for their unchristian conduct. The admonition led them to reform. His second epistle was sent to them from Macedonia. Paul made a second visit to Corinth and remained three months, and then left for Jerusalem, but before his departure, he wrote his Epistle to the Romans.

The form of government in ancient Corinth varied from monarchy to oligarchy, then to aristocracy, but it maintained its independence until

the Macedonian supremacy, when its citadel was garrisoned by Macedonian troops that were expelled, however, when Corinth joined the Achæan League. It was taken by Mummius, the Roman consul, the inhabitants were sold as slaves, its works of art destroyed or conveyed to Rome, its buildings demolished, and for a century, it lay in ruins, except the buildings on the Acropolis and a few temples. In 46 B. c., it was rebuilt by Cæsar, who established there a colony of veterans and descendants of freedmen. It became the capital of the Roman provinces of Achaia and recovered its former prosperity, but the inhabitants still pursued their profligate habits, as Paul intimates in his epistles to them.

The only remains of the ancient city are several Doric columns. Since the beginning of the Christian era, Corinth has been plundered, burned, and nearly destroyed by an earthquake.

After Paul arrived at Corinth, he found a Christian Jew, named Aquila, a native of Pontus in Asia, whose wife was Priscilla. The apostle made his home at their house for a time, and worked at his trade of tent-making, the same as that of his host. Claudius, the Roman emperor, had banished all Jews from Rome, suspecting them, justly or unjustly, of inciting insurrections, therefore dangerous to the safety of the city. Aquila, probably, did not consider it safe to re-

main in Italy, therefore he came to Corinth. For some reason, Paul left the house of Aquila and lodged with Justus, living near the Jewish synagogue, who was a convert from paganism. It has been supposed that the apostle changed his lodgings that he might have more influence with the Gentiles.

When Paul left Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him as far as Ephesus, on his way to Jerusalem. They afterward returned to Rome, and in his Epistle to the Romans, the apostle sent his salutations to them, whom he calls his "helpers in Christ Jesus." He also mentions Aquila in his second Epistle to Timothy.

Paul had been educated as a doctor of law, by Gamaliel, yet he was taught a mechanic's trade, that of tent-making. Tents in oriental countries were very necessary, therefore the occupation of making them might have been profitable. Though Paul labored at his trade during the week, his Sabbaths were spent in the synagogues where he proclaimed the gospel to Jews and Gentiles.

He had previously sent for Silas and Timothy, whom he had left at Berea, and after they arrived at Corinth, their presence inspired him with new courage, when he felt constrained to testify to the Jews, that Jesus was Christ. When they opposed him even with blasphemy, the

apostle shook his raiment, a sign that he would henceforth have nothing more to do with them, and said, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am not to blame for your destruction. Henceforth I go to the Gentiles." There were, however, some of his countrymen who believed, including Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and his family. Many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized. It is possible that Paul felt his insignificance when he saw the splendor of Corinth and the wealth and culture of its citizens, and on this account was embarrassed in view of his duty to address them, therefore he had a vision in the night when the Lord spake to him, saying, "Be not afraid, but speak, for I am with thee, and no one shall harm thee. I have many true friends in this city." It was not the custom of the apostle to tarry a long time in the same city, though he remained at Ephesus three years, yet he labored in Corinth one year and six months, during which he founded a church. He was not, however, permitted to pursue his Christian labors without persecution, for his persistent enemy, the Jews, caused an insurrection, seized Paul and forcibly conducted him to the judgment seat intending to arraign him as a disturber of the public peace. Their charge was, "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." Gallio was the Roman deputy of

Achaia at this time. After the Roman conquest, Greece was divided into two provinces, namely, Macedonia and Achaia, which were governed by pro-consuls. Gallio, the pro-consul, or deputy of Achaia, A. D. 53, was the brother of Seneca, the celebrated philosopher. His original name was Marcus A. Novatus, but when adopted by Gallio a rhetorician, he took his name. He is represented by ancient writers as remarkably mild and amiable in disposition.

The Jews aroused the people as they had on former occasions at Antioch, Philippi, and other places, when Paul was seized and brought to the tribunal of Gallio, charged with the offence of persuading men to worship God contrary to the law of both Jews and Romans. When Paul was about to make his defence, Gallio settled the question in a brief and decisive manner. He said, "If it was a matter of injustice and crime, O Jews, I would listen to you, but if it is one of words and names only, I will be no judge of such matters." Then he commanded them to depart from the court, when the Greeks who had witnessed the persecutions of Paul by the Jews, took Sosthenes the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat, but Gallio did not interfere to prevent it. He may have thought the ruler of the synagogue deserved his punishment or he may have regarded the Jews

with contempt. It has been the practice of using the name of Gallio unjustly, as a synonym for all thoughtless and indifferent conduct on the subject of religion. In regard to the chief ruler of the synagogue, who was beaten, he may have become a convert to Christianity, since Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks of "Sosthenes our brother."

After the incident about Gallio, Paul remained some time at Corinth, then bade adieu to the brethren and embarked on board a ship for Syria, with Aquila and Priscilla, his design being to go to Jerusalem to attend a festival, which may have been the Passover. Paul being a Jew, observed the customs of his nation, even after his conversion, when they were not opposed to his Christian belief. He had made a vow or solemn promise to God, the nature of which is not mentioned, and when he arrived at Cenchrea, the eastern part of Corinth, he had his hair cut, at the expiration of the vow. Now were common among the Jews, the most remarkable being the vow of the Nazarite, when all intoxicating liquors must be avoided, the hair must be left to grow, a house must not be entered containing a corpse, nor a funeral attended. The time for the expiration of the vow varied from eight days to the end of one's life. When the time ended, the priest offered sacrifices and then the

head of the Nazarite was shaved at the door of the Tabernacle, and the hair was burned on the altar.

When Paul arrived at Ephesus, he went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews who were numerous in the city, and had been granted the privilege of citizenship. His visit was brief, and when the disciples urged him to remain longer, he declined, saying, "He must keep the festival at Jerusalem, but if it was the will of God, he would return to them." This he did and remained three years preaching the gospel. After bidding the disciples farewell, he sailed from Ephesus, leaving Aquila and Priscilla.

Ephesus was a celebrated city in the province of Lydia, Asia Minor, about five miles from the sea. It was famous for the Temple of Diana to whom the Ephesians paid great reverence. It was built outside the walls of the city, and was considered one of the "Wonders of the world." It was greatly damaged by an earthquake in the reign of the Emperor Tiberias, who repaired and adorned it so that it was styled "The Ornament of Asia." Some of the other public buildings were the theatre, gymnasia, and Temple of Jupiter. Ephesus came under the control of different rulers, as Croesus, the Persians, Macedonians, Romans, and Moslems. It was highly favored by the Greeks, and considered the most

important city in Asia Minor, by the Romans, but no relics of its former greatness remain. The Ephesians are supposed to have invented the mystical spells and charms by which they pretended to cure diseases and drive away evil spirits.

Paul founded a Christian church in Ephesus to which he addressed one of his epistles, and here the Apostle John and Timothy labored. It was one of the Seven Churches addressed in the Book of Revelation, in which the writer commended the members for their works, but accuses them of having left their first love, and threatens the removal of their candlestick from its place unless they repented, a prophecy that has been fulfilled.

The candlestick or lamp was used as a figure of speech, and was the emblem of the Seven Christian churches of Asia. The one made in the time of Moses was of pure gold, and was kept in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. It had seven branches, one placed in the centre, and three on each side of the centre one. In the Temple of Solomon, there were ten gold candlesticks or lamps, supplied morning and evening with pure olive oil. The golden candlestick with other articles, was taken by the Romans from the Temple at the conquest of Jerusalem and placed by Vespasian in a temple dedicated to Peace.

CHAPTER XX.

MISSIONARY EXCURSIONS.

PAUL, after leaving Ephesus, sailed for Cesarea where he landed to salute the brethren, as an expression of his regard and affection for them. Thence he went to Antioch in Syria. Cesarea was a name given to several cities of the Roman Empire. The one referred to in this place was surrounded by a wall and contained magnificent buildings erected by Herod the Great. It was situated on the coast of the Mediterranean about sixty-two miles northwest of Jerusalem, and was named in honor of Augustus Cæsar, to whom a temple was dedicated, in which was placed a statue of the Roman emperor; the city became the seat of the governor while Judea was a Roman province. Within the space of ten years after the foundation was laid, Cesarea became the most flourishing city in Syria, but at the present day it is in ruins, with scarcely a trace of its former magnificence. Its inhabitants, palaces, temples, and works of art, have all disappeared.

The apostle spent some time at Antioch, when

he revisited Galatia, and Phrygia, provinces in Asia Minor, for the purpose of encouraging the disciples and confirming them in the Christian doctrines. They were converts from paganism, and perhaps, encouragement amid the dangers to which they were exposed, was timely and necessary.

Apollos, a contemporary of Paul, and a Christian laborer, was a Jew, born in Alexandria, Egypt, where there were many of his countrymen. This city was founded by Alexander the Great, and was celebrated for its schools of learning, and it is probable that Apollos enjoyed their advantages for an education. He was well instructed by his kindred, in the Old Testament, especially about the advent of the Messiah whom the Jews were expecting would soon appear. Being zealous and ardent, he boldly proclaimed his views in the synagogue at Ephesus. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they perceived that he needed clearer and more definite ideas on the subject, therefore they instructed him more perfectly, by proving that the Messiah had already come in the person of Jesus.

Apollos decided to go to Achaia, when the brethren at Ephesus gave him a letter of introduction to the Christians in that region. Many of the Greeks were captivated by his eloquence, and the Jews were silenced by his strong argu-

ments, proving from their Scriptures, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah predicted by the prophets.

It is supposed his great popularity tended to cause a schism in the Christian church, since Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, alludes to such an event. "It is reported," says the apostle, "that some of the disciples say 'I am of Paul,' some, 'I am of Apollos,' and others, 'I am of Cephas.'" He then reproves them and says, "Who is Paul, and who Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believe? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. He that planted, and he that watered are one."

Paul and Apollos were not separated, but labored together in the same cause, on friendly terms.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having travelled in his missionary tour through Phrygia and Galatia, called the upper regions, because they were situated on a high table-land in Asia Minor, came to Ephesus, according to his promise, and found there certain disciples who had embraced the doctrines of John the Baptist. The apostle inquired whether they had received the Holy Ghost, and they replied, "We have not heard whether there is any Holy Ghost." After some explanation by Paul, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when the apostle

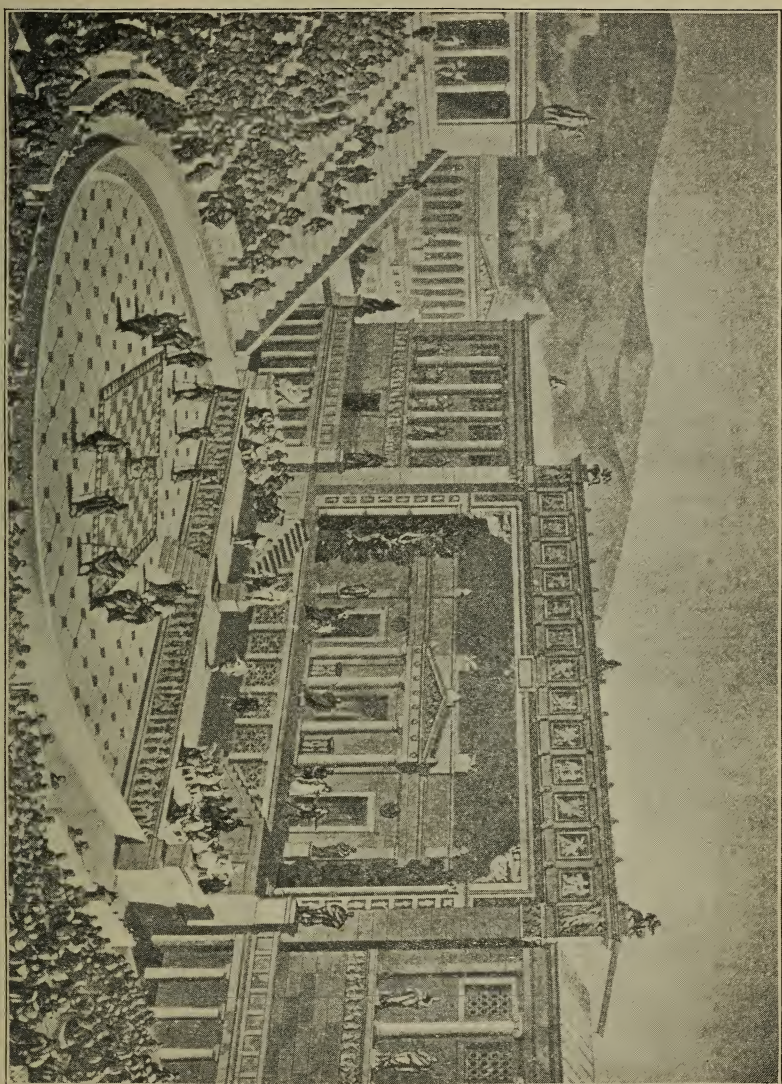
laid his hands upon them, their number being about twelve men, the Holy Spirit endowed them with the power of prophecy, and the gift of speaking foreign languages, as on the day of Pentecost.

As was Paul's custom, he proclaimed the gospel to his own countrymen in their synagogue, for three months, but when many of them opposed and misrepresented him, he separated the disciples from their influence, while he taught daily in the school or hall of Tyrannus for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia Minor heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. It is not known who Tyrannus was, but it is probable he was a Jew, and perhaps favorable to Christians. There were no church buildings at that time, and the disciples were obliged to assemble in any place convenient for public worship. Miracles were wrought by the apostle, so that handkerchiefs or napkins used by him, when brought to the sick or those possessed by evil spirits, were cured. The Jews generally believed in exorcism, or the power to cure diseases and cast out demons, by means of charms, incantations, etc. A certain Jew called Sceva, a Greek name, and who belonged to the order of priests, had seven sons who claimed this power, and went from place to place, exercising their pretended authority. They commonly used the name of God in their enchantments. On a cer-

tain occasion they attempted to cast out an evil spirit by saying, "We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." The answer came, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" The man possessed by the demon, sprang at them, tore off their garments, compelling them to escape naked and wounded.

When this surprising incident was known to the Jews and the Greeks at Ephesus, they were astonished and afraid, and confessed their deception in using magical arts, and brought their books or parchments explaining their incantations, and publicly burned them, the cost being estimated at 50,000 pieces of silver, the exact value of which is uncertain. If they referred to the Jewish shekel, they were equal to about \$25,000, but if to Greek or Roman coin, they were far less. Since Ephesus was in a Roman province, it is probable the currency was Roman, therefore the loss to the magicians was between \$8,000, and \$9,000. However, it was a large sum for those magicians to sacrifice, and their act proved they were willing to confess their wrongdoings, publicly. This transaction greatly advanced the cause of Christianity in the celebrated city of Ephesus, and showed to the heathen what an influence it had on its followers.

After the gospel was firmly established at



Theatre of Dionysus at Athens.



Ephesus, the apostle decided, that after he had travelled through Macedonia and Achaia again, he would go to Jerusalem to carry the contributions of the Gentile churches to the poor Christians in Judea. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus, a chamberlain or treasurer of Corinth, to Macedonia, perhaps for the purpose of making a collection for the needy saints at Jerusalem, but the apostle himself remained at Ephesus for a time, when a great public excitement occurred about the doctrines taught by him. The tumult was caused by a certain silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines for the goddess Diana.

This was a profitable business for Demetrius and his craftsmen. These shrines were small portable temples, which may have contained a silver image of the goddess, therefore they would be purchased by worshippers, a great number of whom came to Ephesus to offer her their homage. The pagans were in the habit of carrying with them the representation of their gods as amulets or charms. Among the Romans, their household gods were called Penates. When Demetrius had called together the silversmiths, he addressed them in substance as follows: "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we gain our wealth, but you are aware that not only at Ephesus, but throughout Asia Minor, Paul has gained many followers, and has affirmed that these images made by the

hand of man, are not gods. Moreover, the great goddess Diana, whom all the world worships, is despised, and her magnificent temple will be deserted."

This celebrated temple has been considered as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was built at the expense of all Asia Minor, and required two hundred and twenty years to complete it. The temple was reconstructed several times. It was, as formerly stated, four hundred and twenty-five feet in length, and two hundred and twenty feet in width, and was supported by one hundred and twenty-seven pillars of Parian marble, furnished by as many princes. It has been estimated that each pillar or column, including its base, contained one hundred and fifty tons of marble. The doors and pannelling were of cyprus wood, and the roof was of cedar, while the interior was decorated with gold and the most valuable works of ancient artists. The first Temple of Diana, at Ephesus, is said to have been completed in the reign of Servius Tullius, about 570 B. C. It was finally destroyed by the Goths, 260 A. D., but no vestige of it remains. Is it not possible that artisans, who constructed the Temple of Diana, borrowed some of their ideas from the Temple of Solomon, at Jerusalem?

When Demetrius had closed his appeal to the citizens, they were very angry, probably at the

prospect of losing their gains, and shouted for two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," causing a great commotion throughout the city. The excited Ephesians seized Gaius and Aristarchus, companions of Paul, and rushed with their prisoners into the theatre, a place not only for public exhibitions, but also for holding assemblies, elections, and courts, with the intention of having the matter settled. Paul intended to follow the excited mob, probably to defend his own cause, but he was advised by certain friends not to venture into the theatre, for if he did, his life might be in danger. These friends, denominated chiefs of Asia, were men presiding over religious services, and public games, and whose duty it was to see that due honor was rendered to the Roman emperor. They held a common council in the principal city of the provinces, for consultation, and, probably, they were assembled at Ephesus when the exciting events just mentioned occurred. They, perhaps, had listened to Paul's preaching and were friendly to him, though there is no positive evidence that they were Christian converts. We have in this account a correct representation of a mob collected for a purpose they did not understand, as some shouted one thing, and some another, but all were swayed by their passions, so that the chiefs of Asia, or the assembly, were confused, and most of them did

not understand why they had been called together. Some of the crowd, assisted by the Jews, laid hold of Alexander, one of their countrymen, and bringing him to the front, desired him to defend them against the suspicion that they were the originators of the tumult. The native citizens, when they learned that he was a Jew, with one voice, that is unitedly, shouted for two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

When the town-clerk, or secretary, had quieted the tumult, he addressed the crowd, saying, "Ye men of Ephesus, who does not know that the people of this city are devout worshippers of the great goddess Diana, whose statue was sent down by Jupiter? Since no one can question the zeal of the Ephesians, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly, for there is no occasion for a disorderly riot. Demetrius and his associates have brought here these men, who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore, if Demetrius and his craftsmen have any complaint for injustice or injury done them, let the matter be brought before the deputies, or Roman procurators, where they can plead their own cause, and if you wish to settle other matters respecting public affairs, such as relate to the worship of Diana, it will be proper to bring them before a lawful assembly. We are in danger of being called to account by the Roman govern-

ment for this day's uproar, there being no just cause for it," and having thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly. The Romans avoided popular commotions, and they made it a capital offence to raise a mob.

After the tumult, excited by Demetrius, and the workmen had been quieted by the town-clerk, Paul called together the disciples to comfort and encourage them, and gave them his parting embrace, when he left for Macedonia, on his way to Jerusalem. It is probable he went by the way of Troas, where he expected to find Titus, but failing in this, he went by himself to Philippi, Thessalonica, and some other places previously visited, to encourage the disciples, then came to Greece, where he remained three months.

It was usual for some of the brethren to attend the apostles in their journeys, as before stated, therefore, on this occasion, there were several who accompanied Paul to Asia, they having gone before and joined him at Troas. The writer uses the word *us* in his narrative, proving that Luke had again joined Paul as his companion. He had remained at Philippi as a guest of Lydia, while Paul went to Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and other places, preaching the gospel. He says that after the feast of the Passover, we sailed from Philippi and five days after, came to Troas where we remained seven days. While at this

place, the disciples met to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in an upper chamber, lighted by numerous lamps. Here Paul, who was to leave on the morrow, preached to them and continued his sermon until midnight. There sat in a window which was left open, a young man named Eutychus, who, wearied by the long discourse, yielded to the influence of sleep and fell down from the third story, when he was taken up for dead. Paul left his hearers, and going down embraced him, saying, "Trouble not yourselves, for his life is in him." When Paul returned to the upper room and had taken some refreshment, and discoursed a long time, even until the break of day, he departed. The friends of Eutychus were greatly comforted when they saw the miracle that had been wrought in his recovery from injury.

Paul went from Philippi to Assos on foot, preferring that method of travel when practicable. There were several cities named Assos, but the one mentioned in this connection was between Troas and Mitylene, the capital of the island of Lesbos, one of the largest in the *Ægean* Sea. The capital was distinguished for the beauty of its situation and the magnificence of its buildings. It passed through many changes and held an important position, but finally came under the control of the Romans. The Island of Lesbos

was, in early Greek history, celebrated as the original place of the Æolian school of lyric poetry, and the home of several lyric poets, including Sappho. Besides poetry, philosophy and literature flourished here, and it was the home of many historians and other learned men.

The sacred writer says, "We sailed from Mitylene, and passing by Chios or Coos, an island in the Archipelago, and the next day arrived at Samos," also an island in the same sea, both celebrated in ancient times for their excellent wines. Samos, now called Scio, was the scene of a fearful massacre of the inhabitants by the Turks in 1823. Paul and his companions stopped at Trogylium, a town on the coast opposite Samos, and the next day arrived at Miletus or Miletum, a seaport, and the ancient capital of Ionia, originally settled by a colony from Crete. It was the birthplace of Thales, one of the "Seven wise men of Greece." It became a powerful city and sent colonies to several places, and was celebrated for a magnificent temple of Apollo. The apostle decided not to stop at Ephesus, since it would delay his visit to Jerusalem, where he wished to celebrate the feast of the Passover, but he sent for the elders of the church who came a distance, perhaps of forty miles, and when they arrived, he addressed them in "one of the most tender, affectionate and eloquent discourses ever delivered."

It describes the apostle's life when among them and expresses his interest and concern for their welfare, and his firm purpose to live and labor for the glory of God, even though suffering persecution. . Paul had been with the Ephesians three years and could, with propriety, make this appeal, since they had witnessed his faithful labors and devoted life. He affirms that he discharged his duties in humility and without pride or ostentation, and with tears and great dangers on account of the conspiracies of his countrymen to murder him. "I kept from you," says the apostle, "nothing profitable in the way of doctrine, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and Greeks, the necessity of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I am constrained by the influences of the Holy Spirit, to go to Jerusalem, not knowing what may befall me there, only that bonds and afflictions await me. But none of these things alarm or deter me from my purpose, neither do I consider my life so important as to turn me from my purpose, if I may finish my special work, of preaching the gospel, a commission I received from the Lord Jesus.

"Now as ye will never see me again I call you to witness that I am innocent for the loss of any souls, for I have not neglected to declare the whole truth of God." The apostle then cautions

them against the dangers that will beset them, and exhorts them to discharge their duties to their flocks, purchased with the blood of Christ, faithfully, for, says Paul, "after my departure, grievous wolves," using a figure of speech, "will come among you not sparing the flock. Moreover, some of your own church will advance doctrines that tend to cause divisions, therefore watch, and do not forget that for three years, I continued to admonish you night and day, with tears. Now, brethren, as I am about to leave you, I commend you to God who is able to strengthen you and make you partakers of the blessings of salvation, together with all the saints. I have not sought wealth, as you all know, while these hands have ministered to my wants, and in doing this, I have taught by precept and example that you should help support the weak and the poor, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus who said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

When Paul had finished his remarks to the Ephesian elders, he knelt down and prayed, when they wept and embraced him with kisses, because of his tender advice and interest in them, and also that he was about to leave them and they would, probably, never see him again. They conducted him to the ship and he left Miletus to resume his journey to Jerusalem.

“After leaving that place, we launched,” says the writer, “and took a direct course to Coos,” an island in the Grecian archipelago, “and the next day came to Rhodes, and thence to Patara,” a maritime city in Asia Minor, opposite Rhodes. Coos or Chios, a small island in the *Ægean* Sea, was known for its wines, figs, and other fruits, for its marble, and the luxury of its inhabitants. It claimed to have been the birthplace of Homer, though seven cities have contended for that honor. It retained its democratic government until conquered by the Persians, though it regained its freedom, and joined the Athenian League, but in consequence of a revolt, it was subdued and laid waste. The island contained rocky mountains and fertile valleys.

Rhodes, also an island in the *Ægean* Sea, comprised more than one thousand square miles, and received its name from its abundance of roses. According to tradition, it was settled at a very early period, and is mentioned by Homer. It became a great maritime state or confederacy, and was the theatre of frequent contests between different political parties and nationalities, until it came under the control of the Romans when they became “the masters of the world.” The Island of Rhodes was celebrated for its Colossus, a statue of brass one hundred and five feet in height, which stood across the mouth of the har-

bor with its feet so far apart that vessels could pass between them. It was considered one of the "seven wonders of the world," but it remained only fifty-six years until it was thrown down by an earthquake, and when the Saracens took possession of the island about nine hundred years after, it required nine hundred camels to remove the brass.

The natives of the island were fond of navigation, made frequent voyages and established numerous colonies. The chief city named also Rhodes, was celebrated for its architectural beauty, and its number of statues.

Luke continues his account of the voyage and says, "After securing a vessel bound for Phœnicia, we embarked and passing by Cyprus on the left, we came to Syria, and landed at Tyre, where the ship was to unload its cargo." Here they remained seven days with the disciples of that city, who urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but as he was not to be turned aside from his purpose, they, with their wives and children, accompanied the apostle outside the city where they kneeled on the shore and prayed. When they all had bidden one another farewell, Paul embarked and his friends returned to their homes.

A brief description of Tyre, a city so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, is as follows: It

was in Phœnicia, situated on the Mediterranean, and built, according to Josephus, about two hundred and forty years before the Temple of Solomon, therefore it was a very ancient city, and constructed partly on an island, and partly upon the mainland. The insular city was on a small rocky island, but continental Tyre was very large. It was, in the course of its history, besieged five years by the Assyrians who were unable to capture it, but later, after a siege of thirteen years, it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and after a siege of five months Alexander the Great captured it, and built an immense causeway, half a mile in length, to connect the two parts of the city, but he burned the old Tyre. It was, however, rebuilt and in less than twenty years, had recovered, to a great extent, its former commercial importance. Nevertheless, it was captured by Antigonus and subsequently by the Syrians, Egyptians and Romans in succession. It was taken by the Saracens, the Crusaders, and finally by the Mamelukes of Egypt. The predictions of the Hebrew prophets were fulfilled, who said that, "Tyre should become like the top of a rock, a place upon which to spread nets," referring to the practice of fishermen.

After leaving Tyre, Paul and his companions came to Ptolemais, and having saluted the

brethren, they remained with them one day. Ptolemais, originally called Accho, was named for one of the Ptolemys, and was situated on the Mediterranean. On the south and west, it was bordered by the sea and to protect it, was surrounded by a triple wall. It contained a temple of Diana and a bath of Venus. The Crusaders called it Acre or St. John of Acre, from a magnificent church dedicated to the Apostle John. It sustained several sieges during the wars of the Crusades, but was recovered by the Turks, and at a late period was besieged by the French, but it has regained much of its former strength and importance though there are very few relics of its earlier magnificence.

The next day Paul left Ptolemais and came to Cesarea, where he lodged with Philip, one of the seven deacons who, after his conversation with the eunuch of Ethiopia, went to Cesarea.

Philip had seven daughters who were endowed with the spirit of prophecy. Paul and his company remained there many days, and in the meantime, a prophet named Agabus, came from Jerusalem. On a former occasion, he had predicted, at Antioch, that there would be a great famine throughout the world, which did occur in the reign of Claudius Cæsar. When Agabus came to Paul at Cesarea, he took the apostle's girdle or belt used to confine his robes, as was the

custom, and bound his own hands and feet, saying, "The Holy Spirit has revealed that the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the owner of this girdle and deliver him to the Gentiles."

When his friends heard this prophecy, they besought Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but he replied, "Why do ye weep and break my heart, for I am not only willing to be bound, but also to die for the Lord Jesus." When they found he was determined to go, they acquiesced, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." After this incident, Paul and his companions prepared for their journey and started for Jerusalem, accompanied by certain disciples from Cesarea.

When they arrived at the capital, the brethren received them joyfully, as they had returned in safety, after a long absence, and exposure to many hardships and dangers. The next day they went to the Apostle James, and the elders, and after the usual salutation, Paul explained the wonderful success they had met with in their labors among the Gentiles. When they heard it, they glorified the Lord. They recognized the apostle as a fellow-Christian laborer, and desired him to do all he could to conciliate the favor of his countrymen for, said they, "Thou seest, brother, many thousands of Jews who believe, and are all zealous for the law, and they have heard that thou teachest those living among the Gentiles, to for-

sake the commands of Moses. How is it? The multitude will assemble when it will be impossible to avoid a tumult." The Jews were greatly excited because one of their own nation had forsaken the religion of their fathers, as they supposed, therefore Paul's presence at Jerusalem would be likely to cause a great public commotion.

His friends suggested a method to avoid such an excitement, somewhat as follows: "James and the elders," they said, "have with us four men who have made a vow of the Nazarites," which forbids several things including shaving the hair. "We advise you to join them and share the expense of the sacrifices and offerings required, that it may be known thou keepest the law. In regard to the Gentiles, we have written that it is not necessary they should observe the ceremonial law, but they should abstain from certain things specified."

The next day, Paul in company with the four men, having performed the ceremonies connected with the vow, entered the temple.

When the seven days for the observance of the vow were ended, the Jews of Asia Minor who had come to Jerusalem, probably, to join in its festivities, aroused a public disorder, and during the excitement, seized Paul and shouted, "Men of Israel, help. This is the man that everywhere

preaches against the Jews, the law, and the temple. Beside, he brought Greeks into this house, and hath defiled it." They had seen Trophimus an Ephesian in the city, and supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

There was a great public commotion, and the people running together, seized Paul, drew him out of the temple with the intention of killing him, and closed the doors.

When the chief captain of the Roman soldiers, whose name was Claudius Lysias, stationed at the tower of Antonio, north of the temple, was aware of the popular tumult, he collected his troops and hastened to inquire into the cause, and when the angry people saw him, they ceased to beat Paul, fearing, perhaps, to be called to account by the Roman government. The chief captain commanded his soldiers to bind Paul with two chains, that is undoubtedly, between two soldiers, one chained to his right hand, the other to his left, thus the prediction of Agabus, that the apostle would be bound, was fulfilled. Some of the multitude shouted one thing, and some another, so there was great confusion. Claudius Lysias commanded him to be taken to the castle, and on account of the popular excitement, he was carried by the soldiers, to protect him from violence, over the stairs which led from the temple to the tower of Antonio,

the crowd following them crying, "Away with him."

As Paul was about to be led into the castle, he said to the chief captain, "May I speak to thee? that is, can I have the privilege of making my defence?" "Canst thou speak Greek?" replied the officer. "Art not thou the Egyptian who led 4,000 men from the wilderness to the Mount of Olives whose purpose was murder, plunder, and insurrection?" The apostle asked permission to address the people, and being granted his request, he stood on the stairs and beckoned with his hand, when there was perfect silence in the crowd, and he addressed them in the Hebrew language.

Before he began his speech, he affirmed his nationality, and mentioned the place of his nativity, thus correcting the mistake of the chief captain, and others who may have been under the same delusion. The scene as pictured by the imagination was as follows: "A prisoner of small size with care-worn visage and bruised limbs, the result of mob violence, chained between two athletic Roman soldiers, who are carrying him to the castle for safety. They halt upon the stairs, when he asks permission to address the tumultuous crowd who are shouting, 'Away with him! Away with him!' The prisoner made a gesture with his hand, when the

clamor was hushed, and the orator began his defence in the Hebrew language." He addressed his hearers as "Men, brethren, and fathers," and then gives an account of his own life, his native place, his early education, his zeal for the national religion, his persecutions of the Christians, his journey to Damascus and what befell him on the way, his conversion and baptism, his call to preach the gospel, his return to Jerusalem, the martyrdom of Stephen, and his own call to labor for the Gentiles, and would have continued his remarks, but his hearers at this point, interrupted him by exclaiming in a loud voice, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! It is not fit he should live." Then they cast off their outer garments, as if intending to stone him, and cast dust into the air, as an expression of their indignation, but Paul, being guarded by Roman soldiers, they could not injure.

The chief captain, not having understood the apostle's Hebrew address, ordered him to be brought into the castle and scourged, that he might confess his offence, which he supposed was some flagrant crime. As they bound Paul with thongs preparatory to scourging, he said to the centurion standing near, "Is it lawful to scourge a Roman uncondemned?" When the centurion heard Paul's question, he said to the chief captain, "Take heed what you do. This man is a

Roman." It was directly contrary to the Roman law to bind and scourge a Roman citizen. The chief captain said to the apostle, "Art thou a Roman?" He replied, "Yes," when the captain said, "With a great sum I obtained this freedom." Paul replied, "I was born free." The captain was afraid when he knew that he had violated a Roman law, and having loosed his bonds, the next day he sent for the chief priests and the great Council of the nation—the Sanhedrim—and brought Paul before them, that he might learn the real nature of the charge brought against him.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN APPEAL TO CÆSAR.

WHEN Paul was brought before the Sanhedrim, or great Council of the nation, comprising seventy members, he observed them closely to ascertain, if possible, the character of the judges before whom he was arraigned. The apostle began his defence by saying, "Men and brethren, I have lived conscientiously before God until this day." Here he was interrupted by a command of Ananias, the high priest, to those who stood by him, to smite Paul on the mouth, to stop his speaking, as the apostle's assertion was offensive to him. Then Paul said, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall," a proverb to denote hypocrisy—"for do you judge me after the law and command me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Those who stood near said, "Do you revile God's high priest?" Paul replied, "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest. It is written thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of my people." The apostle's excuse has been variously interpreted by different writers.

When Paul perceived that a part of the

Council were Sadducees, and part were Pharisees, he said, "I am a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, and for the hope that the dead will be raised, I am called in question." This declaration of the apostle caused a dispute between the two sects, for the Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection, angels, nor spirits, but the Pharisees accepted these doctrines. The questions in dispute were, first, Whether the dead would be raised and exist in a future state; second, Whether mind was distinct from matter. There was a great tumult, when the Pharisees said, "We find no evil in this man," that is nothing contrary to the law of Moses, "but if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God," or as some have understood, "what is there unusual or wrong?"

When the chief captain witnessed the fierce controversy, and fearing that Paul would suffer serious injury at their hands, he commanded the soldiers to go and take him away and bring him into the castle. During the night Paul had a vision, in which the Lord Jesus stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; as thou hast witnessed for Me in Jerusalem, so must thou also at Rome."

When it was day, certain Jews, numbering forty, formed a conspiracy to kill him, pledging themselves by an oath, that they would neither

eat nor drink until they had accomplished their purpose. They went to the chief priests and told them about their oath, and requested them, with the Council, to ask the chief captain to allow Paul to come to them for the purpose of making further inquiry, and "before he comes near, we," that is the conspirators, "will kill him." A son of Paul's sister, having a knowledge of the plot, went to the castle and told Paul, who sent for one of the centurions, and asked him to conduct the young man to the chief captain, as he had a message for him. When the centurion had introduced him, the chief captain took the young man by the hand, and leading him aside, asked him privately what he had to say. It is not revealed by what means Paul's nephew obtained his information about the conspiracy, but it is possible there had not been a strict observance of secrecy among the intended assassins. The chief captain sent away the young man with the injunction, not to repeat to any one the news he had communicated.

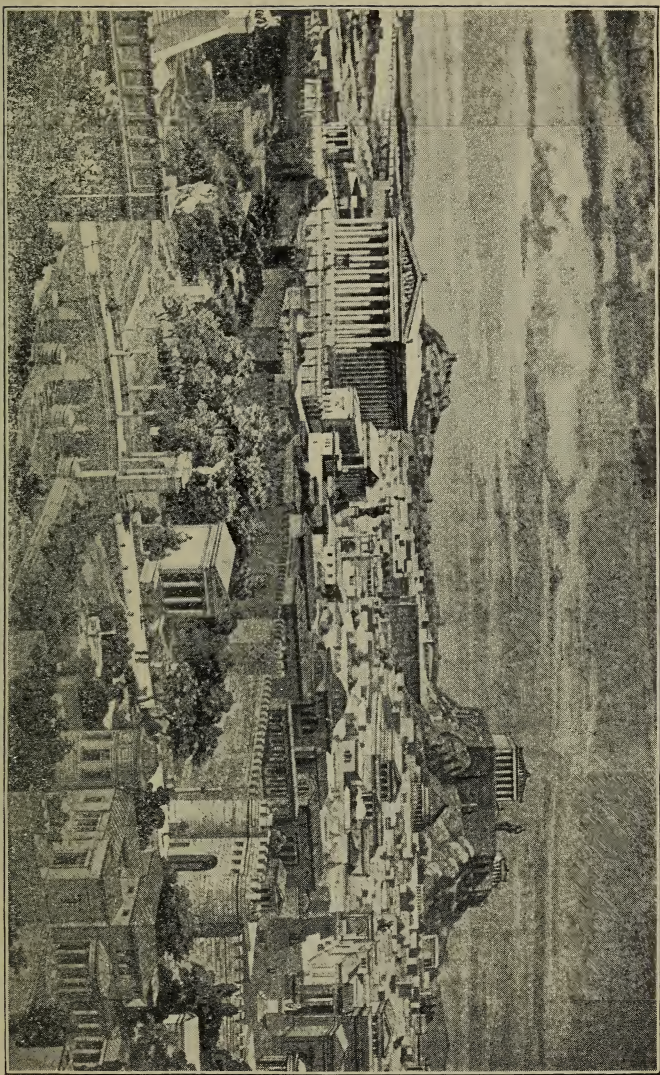
This government official called two centurions, and ordered them to make ready two hundred men under their command, with seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, to go to Cesarea. They were to start at nine o'clock in the evening, so that their departure might not be suspected. They were to provide animals for

Paul and his attendants, who were to be conducted to Felix, the governor of Judea, whose place of residence was at Cesarea, about sixty miles from Jerusalem. The chief captain sent a letter to Felix, saying: "Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor, Felix, sendeth greeting. This man was taken by the Jews and would have been killed had I not rescued him with an army. I brought him to their Council, and discovered that he was accused of having violated some of their laws, but was charged with no crime worthy of death or bonds. When I learned that the Jews laid wait to kill him, I immediately sent him to you, and commanded his accusers to appear before you."

The soldiers, having received their orders, took Paul and brought him, by night, to Antipatris, a town about twenty-six miles from Cesarea, and thirty-five miles from Jerusalem. In the morning, the soldiers having conducted the apostle beyond danger from the conspirators, returned directly to the castle, leaving him in the care of the horsemen, who, when they arrived at Cesarea, delivered the letter of Claudius Lysias to the governor, and presented Paul to him. Felix, having read the letter, and learned that the prisoner was from the province of Cilicia, which was within his own jurisdiction, said, "I will hear thee, when thine accusers arrive," and then commanded him to be

kept in the pretorium or judgment-hall of Herod. Here Paul remained five days until Ananias, the high priest, the elders, and Tertullus, a Roman orator, or lawyer engaged as his accuser, arrived.

When Paul was brought forth from prison, Tertullus began his speech by a complimentary address to the governor, saying, "As we enjoy quietness, and many things have been done by thee for our welfare, we accept them with thankfulness, most noble Felix. In thy clemency, I pray thee, hear us briefly state our case. We have found this man a pestilence, an exciter of sedition among the Jews everywhere, and a leader of the sect of Nazarenes, and one who profaned the Temple. We would have judged him according to our law, but the chief captain Lysias, forcibly took him from us and commanded his accusers to appear before thee." The Jews who accompanied Tertullus to Cesarea, assented to what their advocate affirmed. After the governor had signified, perhaps by a wave of the hand, that Paul could speak for himself, he began; "As thou hast been for many years a judge of this nation, I readily answer for myself, since you are well acquainted with the customs and opinions of the Jews. It has been only twelve days since I went to Jerusalem, and they neither found me in the Temple disputing with any one, nor did I arouse a public excitement in the synagogues or



Athens from the East.

in the city. Neither can they prove the charges brought against me. But this I confess, that according to the way they call heresy, I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things written in the law and the prophets, and I believe in the resurrection both of the just and the unjust. It is my constant aim to do what my conscience approves, toward God and men. After many years' absence, I went to Jerusalem to carry the contributions of the churches to the poor saints in Judea, when certain Jews from Asia Minor, found me in the Temple where I went to fulfill my vow, but in a quiet way unattended by a crowd. These my accusers ought to be here as witnesses if they have anything against me; but let those who are present testify, if they are able, that I did wrong while before the Sanhedrim, unless it was for my opinion about the resurrection of the dead, for which I am called in question to-day."

After hearing Paul's defence, Felix replied, "When Lysias the chief captain comes, I shall be better prepared to decide the case." He then commanded a centurion to take charge of Paul, and allow him the liberty of receiving his friends, and not to forbid any of his acquaintances to offer him gifts. It is evident that Felix was favorably disposed toward the apostle, and would show him all the indulgence consistent

with his safe-keeping. He considered him a persecuted man, and doubtless regarded the charges against him as false and instigated by malice.

Felix had persuaded Drusilla, a daughter of Herod Agrippa, to forsake her husband and marry him, an act considered a violation of the moral law. When the governor and his wife came to Cesarea, he sent for Paul to hear him preach, perhaps to be more fully acquainted with the case, or to gratify his wife who was a Jewess. As the eloquent preacher reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a future judgment, Felix trembled and said, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." The governor sent for Paul many times and talked with him, hoping that the prisoner would give him money, and after two years, Felix, to show the Jews a favor, left him bound, that is a prisoner, and retired from his official position, succeeded by Porcius Festus.

Claudius Felix was procurator of Judea in the reigns of the Emperors Claudius and Nero, and was a freedman of Claudius. His original name was Antonius Felix. Both in his public and private character, he was unscrupulous and profligate. His government, though cruel and oppressive, was strong. He suppressed all public disturbers of the peace and freed the country

of robbers. He arrested a band of highwaymen and sent them to Rome for punishment; he seized an Egyptian false prophet who led four thousand men in the wilderness, and threatened the peace of Judea; and he repressed a sedition incited by the people of Cesarea and Syria. He was especially successful in quieting riots and insurrections. When he was recalled to Rome, he was followed by Jews who accused him of extortion and other acts of injustice during his administration, but he was saved from punishment by the plea of his brother Pallas, before Nero.

After Festus had arrived in Judea to assume his official duties, he remained three days at Cesarea, and then left for Jerusalem. Though the Roman governors usually resided at Cesarea, yet it was necessary to visit the capital to become acquainted with the affairs of the nation. As soon as it was known the governor had arrived, the high priest and chief men among the Jews, informed him about Paul, and urged him to send for him under the pretence that he might be examined by the Sanhedrim, but their object was to waylay and kill him. Festus told them Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would soon go there, then "those who are competent can go with me and appear as his accusers, if he has committed any crime."

As Paul was a Roman citizen he could not be

tried by the Jewish Council, therefore he would be brought before the governor at Cesarea. About ten days after, Festus returned to Cesarea, and the next day he held a court for the trial of the apostle. As he sat in the judgment-seat, the Jews, Paul's accusers, stood near and made known their complaints against the prisoner, probably the same as those with which they had charged him before Felix, but they could not prove them. Paul affirmed that he had done no wrong against the Jewish laws, the Temple, nor Cæsar. Festus, willing to please the Jews said to Paul, "Will you go to Jerusalem and be tried there before me?" The prisoner firmly replied, "I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as thou knowest. If I have committed any offence deserving death, I refuse not to die, but if I am innocent, no one should deliver me to them. I appeal to Cæsar." When Festus had conferred with the Council, he said to Paul, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? Unto Cæsar thou shalt go."

King Agrippa and Bernice came to Cesarea to salute Festus, and show him respect as the governor of Judea. During their visit, Festus informed them about Paul, giving an account of his case and the opposition of the Jews, etc. Agrippa, who, of course, had heard of the excite-

ment about him, said he should like to hear the man himself. Festus replied he should have the opportunity on the morrow.

The next day, Agrippa, Bernice, the chief captains, and civil officers of the city, came with great parade and splendor, and entered the courtroom, when, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought into their presence. Festus then addressed the king, saying, "King Agrippa, and all others present, this is the man whom the Jews accuse, saying that he ought not to live any longer, but when I found that he had done nothing worthy of death, and that he himself had appealed to Cæsar, I decided to send him to Augustus, but in regard to the charges against him, there is nothing definite or proved, that I could send to the emperor, therefore I have brought him before you, King Agrippa, that you, being of the same nation, might give me more particular information, for it seems unreasonable to send a prisoner and not signify the crimes alleged against him."

Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Thou art permitted to speak for thyself." Paul stretched forth his hand, the usual posture of orators or public speakers, and said, "I am happy, King Agrippa, to answer for myself before thee in regard to the things of which I am accused by the Jews." The apostle considered it a favor to

make his defence before one acquainted with Jewish customs and opinions. On former occasions, he had been before Roman magistrates, who had an imperfect knowledge of them, therefore were incompetent judges. Paul was now on trial, but he was to defend himself, or state his case so that Agrippa might be able to assist Festus in writing a correct account of it to the Roman emperor. The charges made by the Jews were, that Paul was a mover of sedition, a ringleader of the Christians, and a profaner of the Temple.

Paul says that his manner of life from his youth was known to the Jews, and that he was a Pharisee of the strictest order. "I now stand before this tribunal to be judged upon a subject on which all my nation are agreed, that is the promise made to our fathers, of the coming of a Messiah, a promise which our nation hope to see fulfilled, and for this very hope, King Agrippa, I am persecuted by my countrymen. Is it an incredible thing that God should raise the dead?"

After these preliminary remarks, Paul gives an account of his own experience, stating his opposition to the Christians, and his persecutions of them, his conversion on his way to Damascus, his call to preach the gospel which he promptly obeyed, beginning his labors in Damascus, then going to Jerusalem, and at length proclaiming

the doctrine of repentance to the Gentiles, and that Christ suffered and rose from the dead. "For this reason," said he, "the Jews sought my life, yet through Divine help, I remain to this day; but I preach no other doctrine on the subject, than was taught by Moses and the prophets."

Festus, surprised at Paul's earnestness and eloquence, said in a loud voice so that all could hear, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad," meaning that he was insane. Paul gently but firmly replied, "I am not mad, or deranged, most noble Festus, but I speak the words of truth and soberness. The king knows about the things of which I speak, for they did not occur secretly. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know thou believest." Agrippa replied, "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian." The apostle said, "I pray to God that not only thou, but all who hear me may be as I am, except these chains." After Paul had thus spoken, Festus, Agrippa, Bernice, and others present, withdrew to consult together about the matter. They agreed that Paul had done nothing to deserve death or imprisonment in chains. Agrippa said to Festus, "If Paul had not appealed to Cæsar, he might have been set at liberty."

Paul continued a prisoner at Cesarea for some time, waiting to be sent to Rome, after he ap-

pealed to Cæsar. It was a frequent occurrence to transport those accused of crimes, from Judea and other provinces, to the Roman capital for judicial trial. How Paul spent the time while waiting at Cesarea, which some have thought was two years, can only be conjectured. He may have devoted his lonely hours to writing, or at least to planning some of his letters to his fellow-Christians in other regions. A man like the apostle would not dwell with despondency upon his present or past sufferings, nor would he be despondent about the uncertain future, since he was willing to suffer and even die for his Lord and Master.

CHAPTER XXII.

A PRISONER TO ROME.

WHEN Festus decided that Paul should be sent to Italy, he was placed with other prisoners under the guard of Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band, named for the emperor, and numbering from four hundred to six hundred men. The distance to Rome was considerable, and must be travelled mostly by sea. There was at this time, in the port of Cesarea, a vessel from Adramyttium, a maritime town of Mysia, in Asia Minor, opposite the Island of Lesbos. The ship was not bound for Italy, but the centurion expected to find some other vessel on which to embark the prisoners for Rome. However, they, having embarked, loosed their anchors, intending to sail by the coast of Asia Minor.

Two of Paul's friends, namely, Luke and Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, accompanied him, willing to share his dangers, and anxious to cheer and encourage him. The next day they came to Sidon, when Julius kindly gave Paul liberty to land and visit his friends in that city, who, perhaps, supplied him with what-

ever would make him comfortable during his long voyage. Paul had travelled in that region during his missionary journeys, and had won many friends.

Sidon, one of the most ancient cities of the world and a port of Phœnicia, is supposed to have been founded by Sidon, the son of Canaan, perhaps 2000 B. C.; it was sometimes called Zidon. As early as the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, it was known as "Great Zidon." It was situated on a plain bordering the Mediterranean, north of Tyre, and in early times was strongly fortified. It had a good harbor and was the chief seat of the maritime power until it was excelled by that of Tyre. The inhabitants early acquired eminence in the arts, manufactures, and commerce, and were among the earliest shipwrights and navigators. They acquired great wealth, and consequently were luxurious. "To live in ease and security," became a proverb for living as the Sidonians.

This ancient city was captured at different times by foreign powers; as the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians. At the time of the expedition of Xerxes to Greece, the Sidonians furnished the best ships for which they were honored by the conqueror, but during a revolt at a later period, they burned themselves with their city, to avoid falling into the hands of their

enemies, though the town was rebuilt. Sidon was taken by the Romans who held it during Paul's day, but subsequently, it was captured alternately by the Saracens, Turks and the sultans of Egypt, who destroyed it together with Tyre, to prevent them from affording an asylum for Christians. After leaving Sidon, they sailed along the coast of Cyprus to avoid the violent winds, instead of sailing in a direct course for the open sea. Passing by Cilicia and Pamphylia, they came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

Myra or Myron was the capital of the province of Lycia, under the Romans. It was built on a rock, a short distance from land, and in the time of Paul, was an important seaport. There are still ruins of the city which prove its magnificence. Lycia was a province in the southern part of Asia Minor, and is a mountainous region, has a prominent position in the *Iliad*, and is the scene of some ancient legends. The Lycians, under the Persian Empire, are supposed to have been a powerful and maritime nation. Their political history varies, since they come under the rule of different masters. Works of art have been found in this ancient province, some of which are in the British Museum.

While at Myra, the centurion found a ship from Alexandria, Egypt, laden with wheat,

which was an article of export in the trade between Rome and Egypt. It is probable this ship had been driven out of the regular course by violent winds, and had drifted to the coast of Asia Minor. Julius placed his passengers on board this ship and set sail for Italy. Their progress was slow in consequence of unfavorable weather, and it required many days to reach Cnidus, a city in Asia Minor, northwest of the Island of Rhodes, but as the winds continued to blow, they were driven southwest, to the Island of Crete, some distance from Rhodes. Passing by Cnidus, a city built on the promontory of the same name, they sailed along the coast of Crete to Salmone, a point of land at the eastern extremity of the island, where they were in danger of being shipwrecked. Escaping that disaster, however, they came to a place called "The fair havens" in the southeastern part of Crete, near the city of Lasea, where there was a place for anchorage.

Cnidus, a city on the eastern coast of Caria, in Asia Minor, was situated partly on the mainland and partly on an island connected with it by a causeway. It was celebrated for the statue of Venus by Praxiteles, placed in a temple of this goddess. The city contained also temples of Apollo and Neptune, and had the historical celebrity of having been the scene of the great naval battle of Pisander, the Spartan admiral,

and Conon the Athenian general, in the Peloponnesian war.

Crete, now called Candia, is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean. A range of mountains crosses the entire length and in the centre, rises Mt. Ida, 7,674 feet in height which, in mythology, is the place where Jupiter was brought up in a cave, while from its summit, the gods, according to tradition, watched the battles on the plains of Troy; and it was here also, the "judgment of Paris" occurred which eventually led to the Trojan war.

Crete was inhabited at an early period by a civilized people. King Minas, according to history, governed the island before the Trojan war, and is said to have been the first prince who had a navy which he employed in suppressing piracy in the *Ægean Sea*. After several generations, the cities became independent republics, but the inhabitants were degenerate in their morals. Paul describes them as "always liars, evil beasts," etc. They were celebrated archers and frequently served as mercenaries in the armies of other nations. The island was conquered by the Romans 68-66 B. C., and now belongs to Turkey.

Salmone, or Salmonia, an important town in Illyricum, on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, was the capital of Dalmatia. It was strongly fortified, and made a Roman colony. It was the

native place of the Emperor Diocletian, and his home after his abdication. It is said that the remains of a magnificent palace are still to be seen at this place.

Their progress along the coast of Asia was slow and dangerous, on account of contrary winds. It is probable that Julius hoped to reach Italy before the stormy period, but he had been delayed in his plans. Luke says the fast was already past. This referred to the day of atonement observed by the Jews in the tenth month, called Tisri, corresponding to a part of September, and a part of October, the period of the autumnal equinox, when the navigation of the Mediterranean was considered especially unsafe on account of the storms.

Paul, understanding the dangers, tried to persuade them not to attempt the voyage at that season. He told them that it would be attended with perils, not only to the ship and cargo, but also to the lives of the company on board. The centurion, however, believed the captain and the owner of the ship, who was on the vessel, rather than Paul. The "Fair havens" not being considered an appropriate place in which to winter, the majority of the crew advised that they should sail to Phenice, a port or harbor on the southern coast of Crete, where they could pass the winter in safety. The wind before had blown from the

west, but now it came gently from the south, so that the captain supposed they could sail along the coast of Crete, and loosing from "Fair havens," they followed this plan, but soon after, there arose a violent wind named Euroclydon, a Greek word meaning wind and wave. It may have been a hurricane, which rapidly changes its points of compass. The ship could not resist the violence of this wind, therefore it became unmanageable.

Running close to the small island of Clauda, near the southern coast of Crete, where the force of the wind was partly broken, they found it difficult even here, to save the small boat towed to the stern of the ship, therefore, with much difficulty, they raised it on deck, and thus saved it. They next tried to secure the vessel by undergirding it, which was done by passing ropes, cables, or chains from one side to the other, to prevent the planks from starting, by the violent action of the sea. The rope was slipped under the prow and passed along the deck, where it was made fast. The sailors feared they might run upon the quicksands, which were constantly changing their positions. There were two vast beds of quicksands on the coast of Africa, called the "Greater and the Lesser."

As the ship continued to be tossed by the waves, the next day they "strake sail," that is,

lowered the masts or yards to which the sails were attached, either by cutting them down or in some other way. As the storm continued, the seamen lightened the ship by casting overboard the cargo or a part of it, and on the third day of the voyage they cast overboard everything not absolutely essential, such as the anchors, and perhaps sails, cables, baggage, etc. As they could see neither sun nor stars, and having no compass, an instrument not then invented, they could take no observations, and were in ignorance about their position, therefore they abandoned all hope of being saved. In consequence of their prolonged efforts to save the ship, their imminent perils, and fear of being wrecked, the sailors had taken no food for some time.

Paul reproved them for leaving Crete against his advice, and thus exposing all on board to the dangers of a shipwreck, and then exhorts them to be of good courage, for no lives would be lost, only the ship would be wrecked. He then gives the reason for this prediction. He says: "There stood by me in the night an angel of God whom I serve, saying, 'Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar, and God has given thee all who sail with thee.' Be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be as was told me. Nevertheless, we must be cast upon a certain island."

The ship had weathered the storm fourteen days, and during the night of the fourteenth, as they were driven up and down the Adriatic Sea, the seamen, confident they were approaching land, sounded and found the water to be twenty fathoms, or about one hundred and twenty feet. Sailing a little further, they found it fifteen fathoms, therefore they knew they were coming near the shore. Fearing they might be dashed upon the rocks, they cast four anchors and waited for the morning. The sailors, leaving the prisoners and their guards, under pretence it was necessary to carry the anchors ahead of the ship, but really intending to go on shore, let down the boat, and were about to enter, when Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Except the seamen abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved," for there would be no one who understood how to manage the vessel. As the sailors had not entered the boat, the soldiers cut the rope and let it fall into the sea.

After a night of anxious watching, as the day began to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, as they had fasted fourteen days, that is, had taken no regular meal. He then encouraged them by saying that, "Not a hair should fall from the head of any of you," a proverbial expression denoting they should be preserved. Paul then took bread and gave thanks to God in

the presence of the whole company, and began to eat. The others followed his example and were greatly encouraged. The number of persons on board was two hundred and seventy-six. After breaking their long fast, they threw the wheat, with which the ship was loaded, into the sea, hoping by this act to come nearer the shore.

When the day dawned, they discovered land but did not know where they were. However, they saw a bay convenient for landing, and raising the anchors, loosening the rudder and unfurling the sails, they started for the shore, but in their efforts to reach the harbor, the ship ran on a bar or sand-bank and the stern was broken. The soldiers, with shocking barbarity, suggested that all the prisoners should be killed to prevent their escape, though they had not been tried for their offences by any legal court. Roman military discipline was very strict, and perhaps the soldiers feared they might be accused of negligence if they allowed the prisoners to escape. The centurion, wishing to save Paul, prevented the execution of so barbarous an act.

Julius, the centurion, was disposed to treat Paul with kindness from his first acquaintance with him, and, doubtless, believed him innocent of the charges brought against him by his countrymen. He gave orders that all who could swim should cast themselves into the sea and try

to reach land, and for those who were not able to swim to get on the floating pieces of the shipwrecked vessel. Providentially, all on board escaped to land as Paul had predicted. The island called Melita now Malta, was the land they reached. There has been a question about the identity of the island on which the apostle landed. Some writers have thought it was Meleda, in the Adriatic sea, near the Illyrian coast. The inhabitants were barbarians, a term not applicable to the Maltese. It was a damp and woody island, adapted to the prevalence of vipers or poisonous snakes, and to the disease with which the father of Publius was afflicted.

Melita or Malta is an island south of Sicily, and is about twenty miles from east to west, and twelve miles from north to south. Its foundation was stone which was covered by the aborigines with earth brought from Sicily. The island now belongs to Great Britain. It was occupied in Paul's day by a colony from Carthage, therefore their language was not understood by Greeks and Latins. Malta had or has a good harbor, and the inhabitants were wealthy, and their dwellings were large and beautiful. They were celebrated for their merchandise, and all kinds of manufactures including fine linen.

The Greeks regarded all nations barbarians who did not speak their language, but the name

did not denote a people of savage habits, but simply those whose speech was not understood. The natives were very kind to the strangers cast upon their island, and kindled a fire to warm them as it was cold and rainy, the season being October. The apostle assisted them in making a fire, and having gathered a bundle of sticks, he laid them on the wood, when a viper came out of the burning sticks and fastened itself on his hand. When the natives saw this they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer who, though he escaped the dangers of the sea, vengeance suffereth him not to live." When Paul shook off the viper into the fire, without any harm to himself, the Maltese looked on with astonishment, expecting to see him fall dead from the bite, but as he did not, they changed their minds and said he must be a god.

Publius, the Roman governor of the island, entertained the ship's company very courteously for three days. His father was ill with fever and dysentery and Paul calling upon him, after offering a prayer, laid his hands on the invalid when he was restored to health.

The news of the miracle soon spread and other diseased persons came and were healed, while the natives brought gifts of such things as were necessary for the comfort of their guests. Paul and his companions remained at Melita three

months, and then embarked on board a ship from Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was Castor and Pollux. It was customary to place on the prow of the ship the image of a person or god whose name it bore. These were the names of twin brothers and sons of Jupiter, who, according to mythology, after their deaths, were made constellations in the heavens, and were supposed to be the protectors of sailors, therefore their images were frequently placed on ships.

Arriving at Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, they remained three days, after which they sailed along the eastern coast of the island and came to Rhegium, now called R ggio, in the southern part of the kingdom of Naples, and the next day to Puteoli, the modern Pozzuoli, celebrated for its warm baths. Here they were entertained by Christians, but it is not known from whom these disciples first heard the gospel. When the brethren at Rome heard that Paul had arrived in Italy, they went to meet him at Appii Forum and the Three Taverns, and when he saw them, the apostle thanked God and took courage. The Christians at Rome had heard of the remarkable success attending the missionary labors of Paul, and he had written his epistle to them about five years before.

A brief description of some of the other places

through or near which the apostle travelled during his last journeys, is as follows :

Syracuse the capital of Sicily where Paul spent three days on his journey to Rome, was founded by a colony from Corinth about 734 B. C. It spread over a large territory and comprised four or five distinct sections each surrounded by separate walls. Neapolis, one division of the city, contained many temples and the chief theatre, in ancient times. Syracuse contained stone-quarries in which Athenian captive prisoners were confined and on one side was the remarkable excavation called the "Ear of Dionysius" with a small opening above, so that the keeper could hear the conversation of his prisoners. The city was besieged by the Athenians in the Peloponnesian war, and destroyed by them 413 B. C., but was rebuilt. The government was alternately a monarchy and a republic, the changes being quite frequent, until it was captured by the Romans after a siege of two years, when Archimedes constructed different engines of war.

Rhegium, now Reggio, was a Greek town situated on the strait which separates Sicily from Italy. It was founded about the beginning of the First Messenian war, 743 B. C., by emigrants who left their country at the beginning of hostilities between Sparta and Messenia, 743 B. C., called the First Messenian war. At the close of

the Second Messenian war 685-668 B. C., it became a flourishing and important city. The government at first was an aristocracy, but later, a republic. Dionysius, called the Tyrant of Syracuse, carried on a war against the inhabitants for a long time and finally captured the place. In the war with Pyrrhus, the Rhegians applied to the Romans for assistance when the latter placed in the town a garrison of four thousand soldiers, who killed or expelled all the male inhabitants. The Rhegians who escaped were finally restored to their city, but it never recovered its former greatness.

Puteoli now Pozzuoli was a seaport of Campania, founded by the Greeks 521 B. C. In the second Punic war the Romans fortified it, and protected its excellent harbor by a mole of reddish earth called *pozzolana* which, mixed with chalk, makes an excellent cement. This mole was constructed in arches, parts of which are still to be seen. Puteoli was once the chief centre of commerce with Spain, and was celebrated for its warm baths. It has been destroyed several times and rebuilt; some ruins of the ancient town remain.

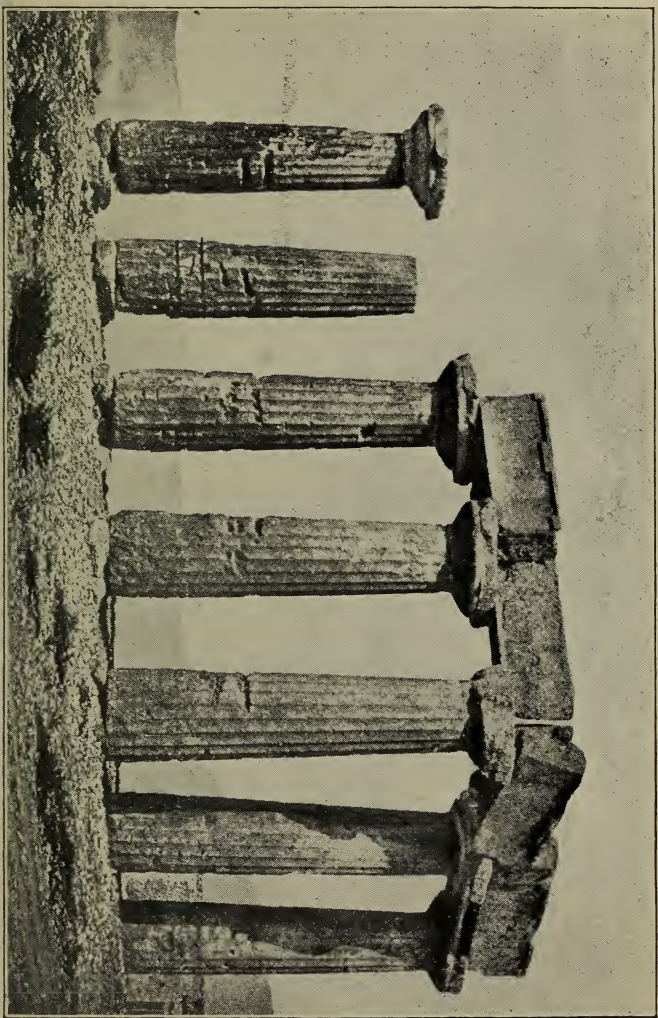
Appii Forum, a city fifty-six miles from Rome designated the "Market-place of Appius," was convenient for travellers. *Apia Via* was the most celebrated of the Roman highways, and

was begun by Appius Claudius Cæcus when he was censor, B. C. 319. It passed through Appii Forum and was the great line of communication between southern Italy and Rome.

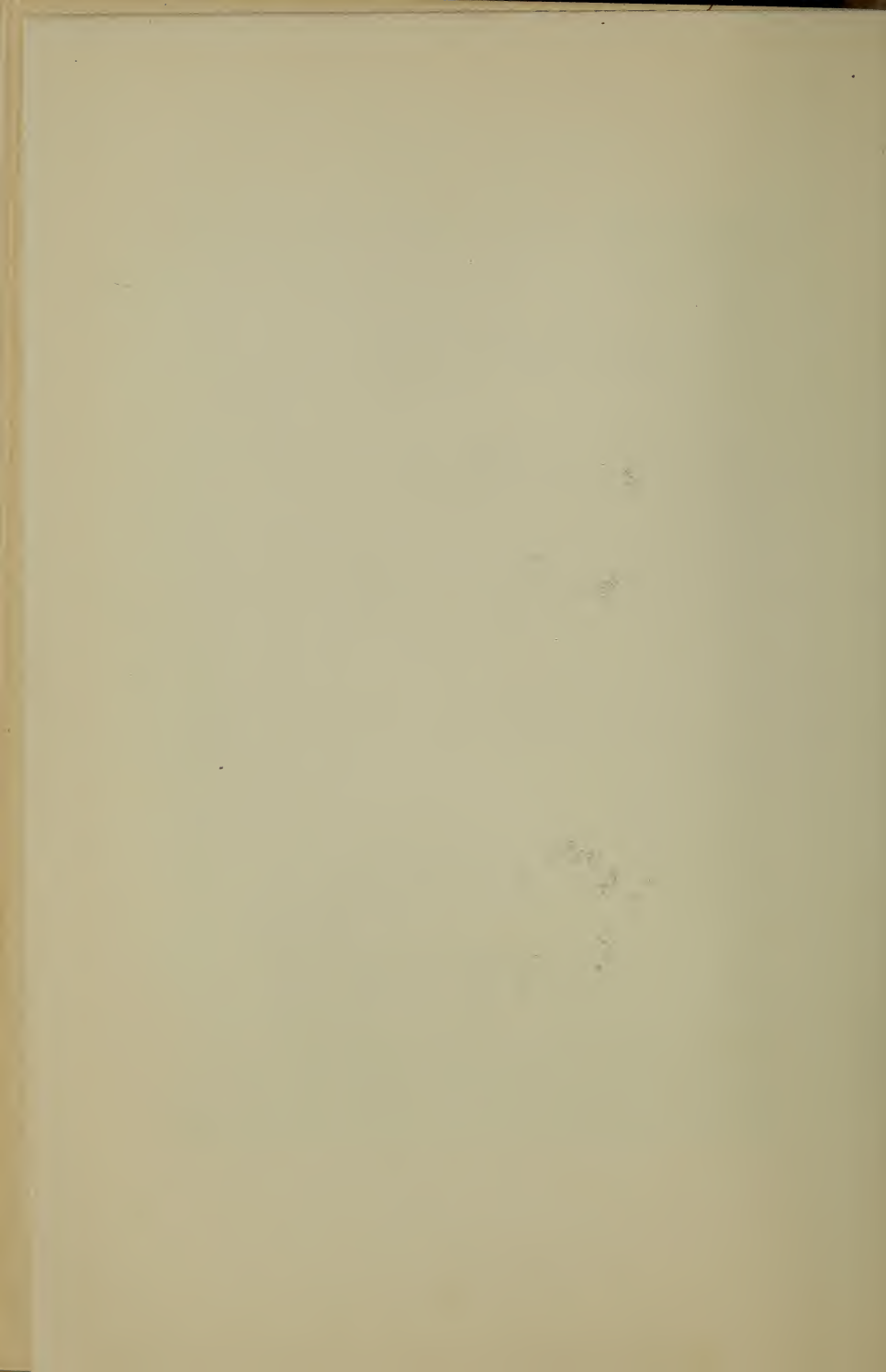
The Three Taverns, about eight or ten miles nearer Rome than Appii Forum, is supposed to have received its name on account of its being a place of refreshment on the Appian Way. A large number of Christians from Rome went to meet Paul of whom they had heard so much, but a part of this company remained at Three Taverns, while the others went to the capital with the prisoner.

When they arrived at Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard or commander of the Pretorian cohort, whose name was Burrhus Afranius according to Tacitus, but Paul was allowed to dwell by himself with a soldier to whom he was chained. The apostle seems to have won the respect and favor of every one who had charge of him.

Three days after the arrival of the apostle at Rome, he sent for the leading men among the Jews of that city, that he might explain his case to them. He may have had two objects in view;—one being to state that the charges against him were false, and the other, to explain to them the gospel of Christ. It was to be expected the Jews at Cesarea would send to those at Rome reports



A Building of Ancient Corinth.



unfavorable to Paul, therefore he wished to defend himself against such calumny. He begins, "Men and brethren," his usual method when addressing his countrymen, "though I have done no wrong to my people or to the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered a prisoner to the Romans who, after an examination would have acquitted me, but the Jews being decidedly opposed to it, I appealed to Cæsar, therefore I wished to give you the reason why I am bound with this chain." The Jews of Rome replied, "That they had not received any letters from Judea concerning him, neither had any one said anything against him." Why the Jews of Palestine had not sent unfavorable reports to those of Rome, is not revealed, but it may have been they considered their efforts unavailing since Paul had been acquitted successively by Lysias, Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. The Jews of Rome seemed more liberal than those of Judea, and they wished to know what Paul thought of the new sect everywhere spoken against.

The apostle had been allowed to rent a house which he occupied and where he received his friends and other visitors. His countrymen appointed a day when they would come to his house to hear him on the subject before mentioned. When the time arrived, a large number assembled at his residence to whom he explained the

principles of the Christian religion, and endeavored to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah, proving his assertions from the law of Moses and the prophets; this he continued from morning until evening. Some of the Jews believed, while others rejected his teachings which led the preacher to quote the language of Isaiah, "Go to this people and say, 'Hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand,' etc. 'Know therefore that salvation is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear.'"

Paul lived two years in his hired house at Rome preaching the gospel, no one forbidding him, and several persons were converted, including members of the emperor's court. When a prisoner at Rome, the church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to Paul with contributions for the supply of his wants. During his confinement, he was the means of the conversion of Onesimus, a fugitive slave of Philemon of Colosse in Phrygia, whom the apostle sent back with an epistle to Philemon and the church at that place.

This closes Luke's account of the eminent apostle to the Gentiles, but tradition and secular history combined, give an account of the closing scenes of his life.

In 64 A. D., a dreadful fire occurred at Rome which continued six or seven days. It is supposed to have been set by the Emperor Nero

who, to divert public opinion from himself, charged the Christians with the crime, which excited a fearfully bloody persecution against them. It is supposed that both Paul and Peter suffered martyrdom at this time, the former by beheading, the latter by crucifixion. Paul being a Roman citizen, it was not lawful to put him to death on the cross. The traditions of the early Christians confirm this idea. Paul and Peter occupy the first positions among the apostles, Paul more especially represents the Christian Gentiles, and Peter the converted Jews. The scenes in the life of Paul have afforded numerous subjects for artists.

The Scripture account of Paul begins with his presence at the martyrdom of Stephen, and closes with his release from an imprisonment of two years at Rome, but it is conjectured that after he was set free, he returned to Jerusalem, travelled through Asia Minor, and other countries formerly visited, and then returned to Rome, was imprisoned a second time and beheaded by order of the Emperor Nero, during a general persecution of Christians.

Paul as a writer has been considered by some critics difficult to understand. It is said that his intellectual powers combined the peculiarities of all the other sacred writers: as Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, James, John, and Peter,

etc. "He possessed," it is said, "great argumentative power, depth of thought, and intensity of feeling. His style is often abrupt and sometimes obscure, and his reasoning is sometimes involved owing to his sudden transitions, the rush of ideas, and sensibility. He sometimes seems to be carried away by the fervor and loftiness of his emotions. The writings of Paul may be compared to a rich mine, and the deeper the workman digs the more he will discover of the precious metal."

It seems wonderful that the apostle, with his extensive journeys, his arduous labors in preaching the gospel and establishing churches in many different places, his persecutions and physical sufferings, could possibly find the time or could concentrate his thoughts, for writing his numerous epistles.

Thirteen epistles are attributed to Paul as the author, and are arranged in the following order of place, according to the Sacred Scriptures. They were written at different periods and from different cities visited by their author.

The Epistle to the Romans, comprising sixteen chapters, was written from Corinth, 58 A. D. The leading idea is "Justification by faith."

First Corinthians, with sixteen chapters, written at Ephesus, 57 A. D. The chief object was to correct errors in the church at that place.

Second Corinthians, thirteen chapters, sent

from Philippi, 57 A. D. The author encourages the disciples and vindicates his own character.

Galatians, with six chapters, sent from Ephesus, 54 A. D.

Ephesians, six chapters, written at Rome, 62 A. D. Subject, the power of divine grace.

Philippians, four chapters. Written at Rome, 62 A. D. Leading thought—Excellence of Christian kindness.

Colossians, four chapters. Sent from Rome, 62 A. D. Chief topic, Warning against errors, and exhortations to perform duty.

First Thessalonians, five chapters. Sent from Corinth, 53 A. D. Exhortation to continue in the faith and godly conversation.

Second Thessalonians, three chapters. Athens, 53 A. D. Its purpose was to correct an error about the second advent of Christ.

First Timothy, six chapters. Written from Macedonia, 67 A. D. Instructions about the duty of a pastor, and encouragement in the work of the ministry.

Second Timothy, four chapters. Written at Rome, in prison, 68 A. D. Leading topic the same as in First Timothy.

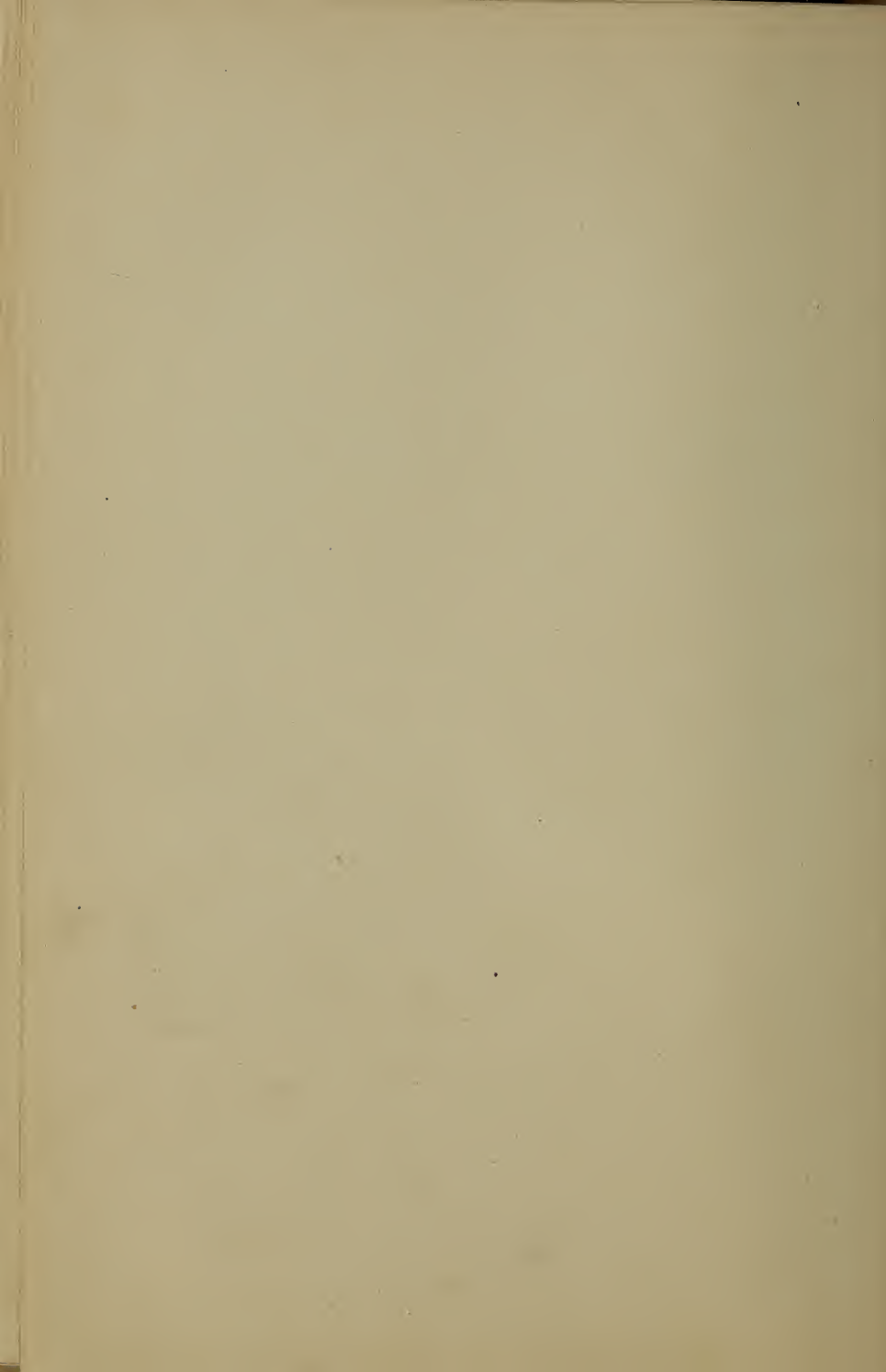
Titus, three chapters. Sent from Nicopolis in Macedonia. The prominent thought, encouragement in the discharge of pastoral duties.

Philemon, one chapter. Written from Rome,

62 A. D. The idea was to conciliate a master in reference to his slave who had escaped.

Hebrews, thirteen chapters. Written to the Hebrews, from Italy. Its leading topic—Christ and the ceremonial law.

There has been some difference of opinion among commentators in regard to the authorship of this epistle, but it is now generally conceded that it was the work of Paul, but the date is uncertain.



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